

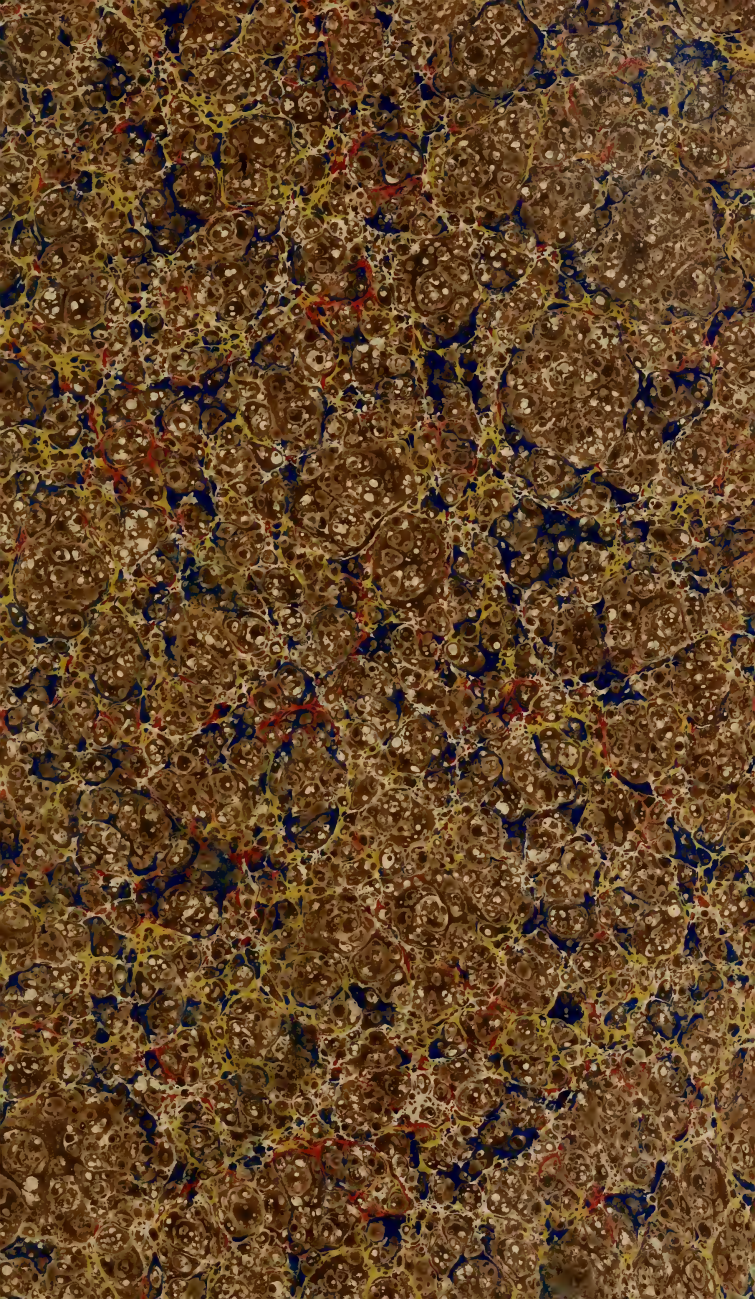
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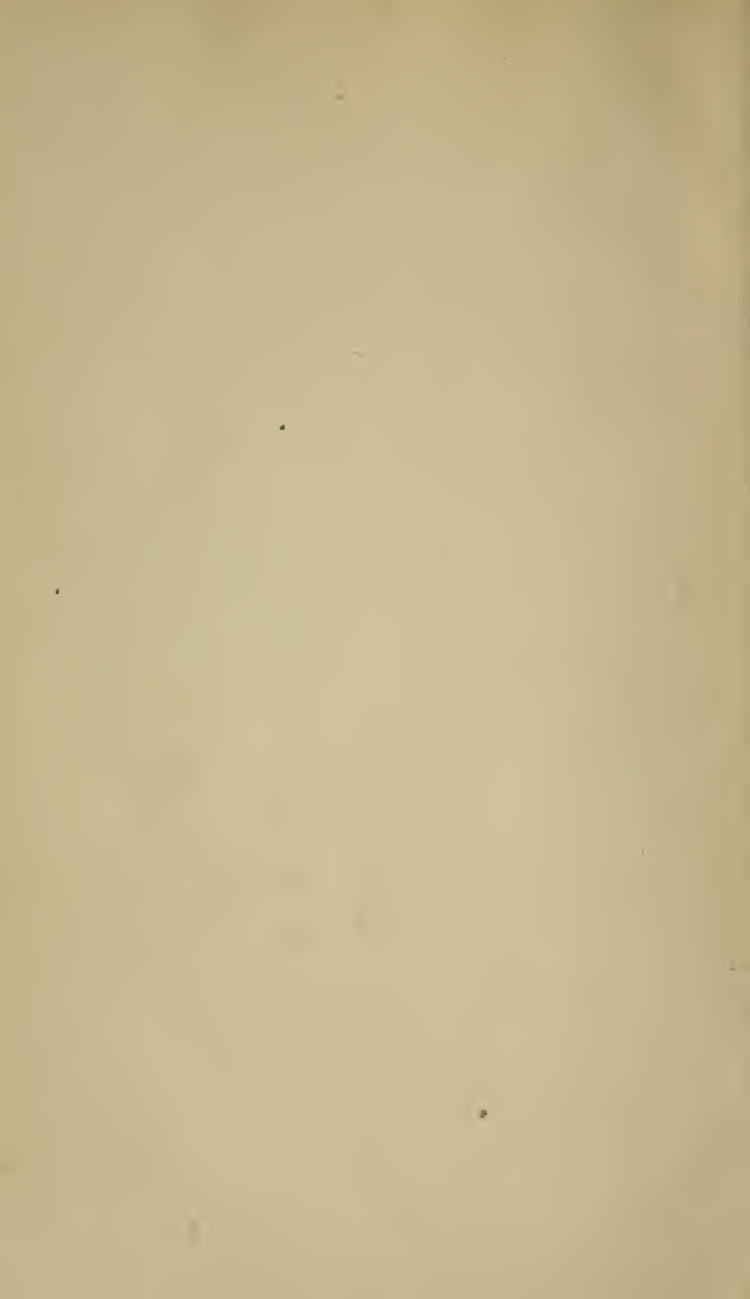


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GREVILLE:

OR,

A SEASON IN PARIS.

BY MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

"MRS. ARMYTAGE," "THE PEERESS," ETC.

Catherine Grace Frances (Moody) Gore

"Oh! English people,—English people!—why can you not stay
and perish of apoplexy and Yorkshire pudding at home?"—

PELHAM.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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GREVILLE;

OR,

A SEASON IN PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

Il faut en finir avec cette reine douairière ; qui d'ailleurs prolonge de la manière la plus illégale l'exercice de son autorité.

BERNARD.

A WIDOWED countess, possessing a sufficient jointure and an only son arrived at years of discretion, is a personage to whom the gay world is sure to concede becoming respect. Between the men who have views upon herself, and the women who have views upon the young earl, a considerable number of potent links are created between her ladyship's interests and those of society.

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Harriet, Countess of Greville, enjoyed to the utmost the advantages of such a position. She was a woman of high descent and honourable alliances, of good appearance and unblemished character. No one remembered much of the circumstances of her married life. The late Earl was much her senior in years,—a valedudinarian,—almost a misanthrope.—They had lived out of the world, forgetting and forgotten; and when the newspapers at length related that the sick man was no more, and that the young Earl, a boy of only eight years old, was left to the sole guardianship of his mother, nobody cared much about the matter, except a distant cousin,—the heir presumptive;—who had some hopes that the child might be killed with kindness, if the Countess were not tempted to marry again.

She never was. The young Earl grew up into manhood, and his parent was still a widow. By the will of his father, he was not to attain his majority till the age of five-and-twenty; and though most of his college friends agreed among themselves that in this particular “Greville was

deucedly ill-used," that "it was doubtless by the influence of his mother over the late Earl she had attained such extraordinary authority over the fate and fortunes of her unlucky son,"—such was the respect testified towards her by the young Lord, that no one presumed to say more to *him* than that "it was a monstrous nuisance to be so hampered!"

Whether Greville were of the same opinion, it was impossible to conjecture. Habitually reserved, passing his holidays and vacations alone with his mother at Greville Abbey, he was graver than was either natural to his years, or than altogether became them. His inferiors thought him proud,—his playmates, dull. He was, in fact, merely undemonstrative, from having had the gay impulses of childhood checked by the society of persons older than himself. There was no sweet sister to compassionate his grievances; not even a pretty cousin to be fallen in love with; and Greville became a melancholy boy, and, in time, a silent man.

The Countess, meanwhile, was one of those

mild, measured personages who are supposed to have no will of their own, because they never assert one. Greville Abbey, prosperous and orderly, was so methodical in its routine, that everything seemed to proceed mechanically and without the exercise of a supreme authority. Deliberate in her movements, low in voice, gentle in demeanour, Lady Greville seemed to differ little from other well-bred middle-aged women. She was choice without being fashionable in her attire; cheerful, without being lively. While her son was still at Eton, people spoke of her as simply a good neighbour, a prudent mother, a sensible woman. Nobody cared much about her; but nobody was heard to say a syllable to her disparagement. And though by the time Lord Greville quitted College, the county of Oxford and coteries of London began to discover that she was a charming person, a very superior woman, one who had made most extraordinary sacrifices to keep single for the sake of an only son, there was, in truth, but little difference between the Countess at forty and the Countess at forty-five.

Of the multitudes who belauded her, however, none thought so highly of her as her son. Greville, who had never had anything else to love, bestowed upon her all the affections of his young heart. She had taken care not to provide him with tutors too agreeable; and the disagreeable tutors had taken care that he should not attach himself too familiarly to companions of his own age. The Countess was consequently his familiar friend as well as his second providence. All that depended upon her care to render his home delightful, except youthful companionship, was sedulously afforded; and as this sole privation was attributed, in his hearing, to intense care for his morals and happiness, amid the levity of a dissolute age, he grew accustomed to seeing old faces about him, and satisfied with the sympathy and friendship of his mother.

If, as it has been before observed, any new light broke in upon the young Earl in the course of his Oxford life, he was too dutiful a son to render any human being cognizant of his opinion.

A period was now approaching, however, to which Lady Greville had always looked forward with consternation. The Earl, her darling Hugo, her idolized Hugo, had just completed his twenty-first year;—a man, though still a minor,—a man, though a legal nonentity. Strikingly handsome, and awkward only in consequence of his strict education and secluded habits of life, she knew that certain inevitable evils must follow his introduction into fashionable society. He would be snapt up by some manœuvring mamma as a husband for her daughter, or devoured by the noble sharpers of some unexceptionable club.—His person and his forty thousand per annum were in imminent danger!—She had failed in making a bookworm of him,—she had failed in making a sportsman of him; under which circumstances, it was impossible to expect that he could fix himself at Greville Abbey, in a singularly dull neighbourhood, more than ten months of the year; and during the remaining two, what mischiefs might not be engendered!—

There was but one resource,—travel—foreign

travel. During an autumn at Cowes, the young Earl luckily imbibed a taste for yachting, and became proprietor of one of the Antelopes or Ariels, thrown every season into the market by the ruin or untimely end of the proprietors. The following summer, enchanted with his new pursuit, he proposed a cruise in the Mediterranean ; and thus favoured in her projects, Lady Greville, whose health was really impaired by the fidgets and responsibilities of her position, got herself ordered to the South ; and while her son dreamed only of being “ spell-bound among the clustering Cyclades,” or amusing himself with an excursion to the Egyptian cataracts, she resolved to establish herself at Naples to await his return.

The absence of the family was likely to be little noticed in Oxfordshire. The hospitalities of the Abbey were at all times limited. Lord Greville had formed no friendships or connexions with society,—his mother had curtailed hers from views of worldly policy ; and, as the same number of chaldrons of coals, and the same provision of blankets, was to be distributed at Christ-

mas to the poor of the village, no one had a right to complain. The school-children were not sorry to escape "my lady's" austere inspection of their monthly catechization; and the keepers much better pleased to poach his lordship's hares and pheasants for their own market, than to escort him through his preserves. Except that the shutters of the state apartments were closed, for the cultivation of damp and the injury of the pictures, and that the lawn was growing a little weedy, the aspect of the Abbey was more cheerful after their departure than during the residence of the Countess.

One person alone was dissatisfied. Some four miles from the park gates, stood the old-fashioned residence of Mr. Massingberd, a country gentleman of independent fortune and independent mind; whose lady, having married her daughters and exercising no control over her only son, had spare time on her hands to take considerable interest in the proceedings of the great family. It was not often she could obtain the attention of her husband; whose mornings were occupied with the cultivation of his estate,

and his evenings with that of his understanding. But there is a spare half-hour in English domestic life, which commits even the most repugnant of husbands to the custody of his spouse,—between the withdrawal of the servants after dinner and the announcement of tea. Poor Massingberd was glad enough when the signal of release arrived. The pause between farming and reading was the only disagreeable moment of his day. Meanwhile, when Mrs. Massingberd was troubled with a fit of prosing, he was not forced to favour her with his attention or his replies further than suited his convenience; the duty of politeness not being included in his category of conjugal virtues.

It was probably because hopeless of an answer that, one doleful autumnal evening, as they sat at their solitary dessert, Mrs. Massingberd restricted her efforts at sociability to a series of heavy sighs.

“ You have eaten too many filberts, my dear,—you will give yourself an indigestion,” observed the squire, on finding that the sixth “ heigh ho ! ” was uttered almost in a tone of interrogation.

“If you look on my plate, Mr. Massingberd, you will find that I have not touched *one*!” replied the lady, swelling with indignation. “Just like you!—because you see me nervous and out of spirits, you seize the opportunity to accuse me of—”

“I did not know you were nervous and out of spirits, my love.—Will you take another glass of sherry?”—

“Thank you!—in order that you may tell me, by-and-by, that my headache proceeds from too much wine!”—

“What *is* the matter with you, my dear?—I see you are determined I shall inquire.”

“On the contrary, I feel that you might spare me the inquiry.—Poor dear Lady Greville!”—

“Has she met with any accident on the road?”—

“I trust in Heaven, not!—No! I only meant that she must have reached Dover by this time.”

“So much the better for her,—and so much the better for us.”—

“For *us*?—What *can* you mean, Mr. Mas-

singberd?—My nearest neighbour,—the only woman of my own condition of life I have to speak to, from one year's end to the other !”

“I congratulate you, my dear. I was not aware that you ranked me at an Earldom. Of whatever condition of life, however,—as Lady Greville and yourself seldom speak to each other above once a fortnight, and then usually to say disagreeable truths to each other,—I cannot suppose that her society is any material loss.”

“Whose fault is it, pray, that we do not meet oftener?—When have I ever the free use of the horses?”—

“As Lady Greville has always a stable-full at her disposal—”

“Lady Greville is too nice a judge of etiquette to return my visits oftener than I pay them,”—interrupted Mrs. Massingberd. “However, I appreciate her good intentions towards me.—I know she is aware that I am not my own mistress, or that I should see more of her; and, in spite of your polite hint about the filberts, Mr. Massingberd, I must say I think I have some excuse for being out of spirits after parting with so old a friend.”

“ *Friend !*”—murmured the squire between his teeth—reflecting upon the three or four dull dinners a-year exchanged between Greville Abbey and Hill Hall, the usual frigid medium of country neighbourhood.

“ Yes, *friend !*—I wish you could know the handsome things poor dear Lady Greville said of me the other day at the Vicarage, in her farewell visit to Mrs. Graves !”—

“ She knew they would be repeated to you before the day was over.—Besides, they say there is nothing on earth so disagreeable that it does not inspire regret when seen for the last time.”

“ Thank you, Mr. Massingberd !—But without stooping to notice your insult, let me beg you not to advert to such a possibility as my having seen the last of poor dear Lady Greville !”—

“ Why, perhaps I am too sanguine. I dare say we shall have her back next year.”

“ You are really shameful !—What in the world has she ever done to offend or annoy you ?”

“ *Me ?*—nothing !—Except occasionally eating her venison, and giving her my mutton in return, I have little or no intercourse, thank

God, with the lady of your own condition of life, whose departure from England has given you a nervous headache."

"Then why speak so unkindly?"—

"I had no wish to talk about her—you *would* make me. And if I *must* give my opinion, it is that we have no loss in the Countess,—that she is a cold-hearted, narrow-minded woman,—that she cares no more for *us* than I for her,—which does not much signify,—and that she is making a spoony of that fine young man her son, which *does*!"—

"What do you mean to say next!" cried Mrs. Massingberd. "The most exemplary mother in England!—Left a widow at six-and-twenty—and single all these years for the sake of her only son!"—

"What temptation had she to do otherwise? I remember everybody wondered when the late Lord Greville married her,—a poor yea-nay creature, without beauty or accomplishment!—She has learned to say yes and no since, with a vengeance, but she is grown neither wiser nor more attractive."

“ I am well aware that you consider all women fools. Men quite as sensible as yourself, however, have pronounced Lady Greville to be a very superior woman.”

“ Ay, ay !—old Graves, and Anodyne, the apothecary !”—

“ No, Mr. Massingberd ;—Lord Brooks and Sir Thomas Hardy.”

“ Ay, ay !—electioneering interests,—conservative combination !—No matter, she has taken herself off, and taken her son off, and I don’t know why we waste our time in talking about either of them.”

“ I am not aware that we have anything more interesting to discuss—that is, more interesting to *me* !”—resumed Mrs. Massingberd, with another doleful sigh. “ Poor dear Lady Greville’s impaired health——”

“ Fiddlesticks, health !”—interrupted the squire, growing really out of humour. “ There is no more the matter with the woman than with one of my cart-horses ;—Anodyne as good as told me so. But she always hated the Abbey, she always hated the neighbourhood. She only

resided here in compliance with her husband's will; and because she was better able to keep that poor lad under her thumb in this secluded place, than if she had given him free range in town. And now you'll see the end of it. He'll escape her at last. The boy knows nothing of the world. He'll be pigeoned and duped on all sides. In Italy he'll be ruined by picture-dealers;—in France, by opera-dancers.—He'll play;—he'll——”

“ You really speak as if you were pleased at the idea!”—cried Mrs. Massingberd, preparing, in majestic ire, to repair to the drawing-room.

“ No, I don't!”—rejoined the squire, for once rising to follow her without staying for the refreshment of his usual doze. “ I'm heartily sorry for it. The lad, as he came from the hands of his Maker, is as fine a youth as ever I saw. But he has been so trained and documented, so restricted and decorumized, that I wouldn't give a rush for him!—My boy Fred, with half his understanding and a quarter of his information, is worth a dozen Lord Greilles!”—

“ I am very glad you think so, Mr. Massing-

berd. I hope you may continue of the same opinion when your Christmas bills come in. When I see Frederick Massingberd exhibit the same respect for *his* parents that I see the young Earl testify towards poor dear Lady Greville——”

“Pho, pho !—Greville is so deucedly in awe of his mother, that he daren’t say his soul’s his own. And if you expect a spirited young fellow like Fred to shew any such contemptible subserviency——”

“Indeed I do *not* !—You have trained him in a very different school.”

“I hope so. Between me and my son, all is frank and above board. He knows with whom he has to deal, and what he has to expect. Whereas the noble widow, the excellent mother, the woman of your own condition of life yonder at the Abbey, never opened her heart to *her* son in her whole life,—if, indeed, she *have* a heart to open,—which I doubt. Her gentleness is cold-bloodedness,—her mildness, mere hypocrisy. ‘The stillest streams’—the proverb’s somewhat musty.”—

“ Musty indeed !”—sneered Mrs. Massingberd, unconscious of the quotation. “ But I am sorry to have put you into a passion.—I did not intend to excite you in this way.—Perhaps we had better drop the subject.—I daresay the evening papers are arrived.”—And she rang the drawing-room bell with an air of magnanimity ; pleased to have extorted from her usually taciturn mate at least thrice the portion of conversation with which he was in the habit of enlivening their conjugal *tête-à-têtes*.

CHAPTER II.

La Comtesse avait réussi au delà de ses espérances. En retour d'un dévouement dont la gravité fortifiait la tendresse, elle avait obtenu de son élève une soumission sans bornes, un respect digne des temps antiques.

L'ARBRE DE SCIENCE.

THE young Earl of Greville, the object of so much solicitude on the part of his mother and of discussion in the dining-room at Hill Hall, possessed considerable personal endowments, in addition to those of wealth and aristocratic inheritance.

Above the common height, his figure was well shaped and proportioned. His complexion was fair,—almost too fair for a man ; particularly as the slightest excitement of mind, or even em-

barrassment of manner, sent the eloquent blood flushing even to the roots of his somewhat redundant brown hair. But his forehead was expansive and noble, his mouth expressive; and his countenance redeemed from the insipidity commonly attributed to *blondins*, by the dark eyebrows and eyelashes surmounting his full grey eyes. On the whole, he was what is called strikingly handsome;—that is, strikingly handsome for an unmarried earl, with a rent-roll of forty thousand a-year.

Still, Mr. Massingberd was right. His air was deficient, his manners were defective. In direct opposition to the faults and foibles of the age, he was too reserved, too diffident. He had declined addressing his tenants at a dinner previous to his departure for the Continent, at which his health had been “drunk with unbounded applause;” and Lord Brooks, who at present retained the control of his parliamentary interest, felt satisfied that the young Earl would never find courage to support in the Lords the principles advocated by his delegates in the Commons. He might be clever and well in-

formed, but he wanted conversational power,—the ready money so much more available than consols or exchequer bills.

“ A sensible youth,—but devoid of all energy or ambition !” was the private hint of Lord Brooks to the minister, who inquired into the nature and politics of the young Earl possessing so large a stake in the country.

“ A raw, shy young man, who hates dancing, and blushes when a woman speaks to him !” was the information of Lady Brooks to Lady Hardy ; and it was the invitation despatched to Lord Greville, in consequence of this intelligence, to join a party at Sir Thomas Hardy’s, to shoot his pheasants and be shot at by his daughters, that eventually accelerated the departure of the Countess from Greville Abbey.

It was, in fact, impossible to be more resolutely determined than her ladyship to postpone to the latest moment the epoch of her dowagerhood. Her interests and affections were equally engaged in the struggle. For one and twenty years, her son had engrossed her care and attention ; and as Lady Greville was

arrived at a period of life when her care and attention were of little importance to any other human being, any event that tended to dis sever her from the young Earl was a decree of bankruptcy.

Greville Abbey, too, was a place of her own creation. Totally neglected during the reign of her valetudinarian husband, she had found a desert, and founded a paradise. It was true she had done all this at the expense of other people's taste and her son's money,—without design, without intelligence. But it was something to have done it. She was as proud of the fine gardens which brought all the county to admire them, as she was of the handsome young son, for whom she seemed to dread a similar destiny; and, glorying in her supremacy both as mistress of the family seat and mother of the earl, with the short-sightedness of human wisdom she exiled herself from the spot during the last years of her regality, lest her sway should be prematurely divided.

The affection of Lord Greville for his mother, meanwhile, was of a nature even yet more ex-

clusive. He loved nothing else on earth ; or if he loved Greville Abbey, it was as owing its merit to her superintendence. His childhood and youth had been surrounded by the parasites of his mother, by whom he was accustomed to hear her described and addressed as a being of superhuman excellence ; and though their neighbour Lady Brooks was a beauty, and their neighbour Lady Hardy one of the finest musicians of the day, Greville had been taught to believe that the Countess was handsomer and more accomplished than either.

It might have touched a warmer heart than that of “poor dear Lady Greville” to see the eagerness with which their expatriation was seconded by her unsuspecting son, from the moment the state of her health was cited as an incentive to the measure. Though a middle-aged countess is rarely included among the singular varieties of freight authorized by the whims and caprices of the Royal Yacht Club, Greville was eager in offering a passage to Naples to his mother ; till satisfied, by her repeated assurances, that she preferred trans-

ferring herself thither by land. His next object was to precede and provide for her coming; and if the young Earl were eventually persuaded into leaving his mother at Naples, and proceeding on his projected tour in the East, it was not till he had obtained professional certification that Lady Greville was free from all personal ailment, and that her nervous disorder would be more speedily benefited by being forced into the society of strangers.

Thus enfranchised, young Greville set sail for the Levant. It was the first outbreak of his independence. He was master of himself and his yacht; and dearly as he loved his mother, it was something to feel freed from a frustrating influence. Though Lady Greville's power over his mind had been obtained by ministering to its caprices, he was not sorry to be able to provide for his own.—Those only who have been uniformly subjected to control, can understand the delight of being able so much as to eat one's dinner at one's own time and discretion.—

And now, "the world was all before him where to choose!"—He spent weeks at Athens,—weeks

at Constantinople,—Smyrna,—Damascus; where a cultivated education supplied him with the means of extracting double enjoyment from the scenes of classic story and oriental romance. The impulses of youth and health were fresh upon him.

His tent on shore, his galley on the sea,

enabled him to taste the raptures described by most travellers in the East, from Chateaubriand and Byron down to the *menu fretin* of fashionable ramblers, smitten of late years with a passion for crocodiles and hieroglyphics.

It was not till the spring that Lord Greville returned to Naples. The Countess, who had no wish to entangle him in the mob of English absentees besetting the Chiaja during the winter months, had been unvarying in her entreaties to him to enjoy to the utmost his facilities for surveying countries he was unlikely to revisit; and when, at the close of March, she had the happiness of folding him once more in her arms, it was a genuine impulse of motherly tenderness that caused her to exult in his fine manly appearance,

knit into firmer vigour, and bronzed into manlier grace, by exposure to the hazards of sea and land in tropical climates. For a moment, she felt sincerely proud of her handsome Hugo; for a moment she fancied that it would be a triumphant thing to see him figure at the court of Naples, and in the dull coteries of high-born English among whom she had been dozing away her winter.

“You will find a few pleasant people here,” said she. “The English set is somewhat broken up;—most of them are off for Rome, for the ceremonies of the holy week. But there are the old Marquis of Droneham and his two daughters,—the Dowager Lady Dawdle, the Ebsworths, the Macmichaels, and Lady Louisa Clare. We make up our whist every evening.”

“So you wrote me word. I was delighted, my dear mother, to find you were passing your time so agreeably.”

“The Droneham’s talk of spending the summer at Sorrento,—the Ebsworths and Macmichaels are going to Lucca. I have scarcely

made up my mind *which* of the two parties I shall join."

"I thought—I fancied—" hesitated Greville,—“that you intended returning to England?”—

“To Greville Abbey?”—

“To London,—for the season.”

“*The season?*”—reiterated the Countess, who had never before heard that cabalistic word escape the lips of her son. “A season in London would destroy at once all the benefit I have derived from my residence abroad!”—

“In that case, to the Abbey at once,” frankly resumed her son. “If you remember, you desired me to pledge myself at the tenants’ dinner, that our absence should not be prolonged beyond the summer.”

“Did I?—At the tenants’ dinner?—I don’t remember anything of the kind. At all events, it can be of no importance to *them*. Dowdewell manages everything during our absence with the most impartial regard to their interests; and as you have no tie at present in the House of Lords—”

“True,” interrupted Greville, in an absent, careless tone. “I do not see what object there was in making a declaration on the subject. However, as the pledge *was* given—”

“There will be quite sufficient excuse for resuming it, in the state of my health,” rejoined the Countess, coolly. “You have no particular attachment to London, or taste for the crowds of heated ball-rooms—”

“None whatever,” again and more eagerly interrupted Greville. “But I am just as little inclined to reek away the summer in a southern climate. I have promised Massingberd a month’s shooting at the Abbey in September. The interval, I should like to spend in Switzerland or Germany.”

“Massingberd?”—repeated Lady Greville, in some surprise.

“Fred Massingberd, whom I met in quarantine at Malta, and to whom I gave a cast hither in my yacht.”

“The son, I presume, of those people at Hill Hall?”—

“The son of the Massingberds of Hill Hall.

Old Massingberd, I am told, was a great friend of my father."

"His nearest country neighbour, which in England is a common substitute for friendship," replied Lady Greville, taking up her work as some cover to her surprise and embarrassment.

"Fred came to Naples last autumn with the Cobhams, with whom you are acquainted," resumed her son. "Lady Cobham, I fancy, is one of his sisters?"—

"Yes,—we visit,—I am slightly acquainted with her. The Cobhams are gone to Rome."

"No — they have been waiting here for Fred Massingberd, who has been making excursions in the Mediterranean. I have half promised to join their party when they quit this place, as I fear I shall be too active a *compagnon de voyage* for an invalid like yourself."

"Certainly—you cannot do better"—replied Lady Greville, with apparent unconcern; too experienced in her vocation to exhibit, and consequently call forth, a spirit of resistance; nor was it till she had taken leave of her son for the night, that she addressed herself to deliberate

cogitation upon the evils likely to arise from his sudden intimacy with young Massingberd and his relations.

The family at Hill Hall were people whom she would have disliked, had she not despised them. They were neither subservients nor equals. Old Massingberd had opposed her projects on various occasions of county interest; and his wife, who, till the marriage of her two daughters, was in the habit of spending her season in town, had proved the sort of standing bore which most country neighbours are felt to be by the great ladies of their county, from the moment they set foot in the metropolis;—always wanting to be introduced to somebody out of their sphere, or to obtain an invitation to some party out of their reach; and having nothing to offer in return, but their fussy thanks and humdrum society.

Even in Oxfordshire, she saw as little of them as she could help. They were the sort of respectable people whose family affairs afforded little to excite interest or surprise. She knew they had a son, nearly of Hugo's age; but she

remembered him only as an insignificant young man, of no manner of consequence except to the small estate he was to inherit. The daughters were pretty insipid girls; and it was a relief to her when Julia Massingberd married Sir James Cobham, and Mary, a few months afterwards, a country clergyman; as it abridged the Hill Hall party when they came to dine at the Abbey, and afforded some diversification to Mrs. Massingberd's family narratives, when they victimized each other with morning visits. As to giving her attention to the pretensions of either, or interesting herself in the destinies of those whom she had seen expand from girlhood to womanhood, it was an effort beyond the limit of her profound selfishness.

Lady Greville now began to regret her ignorance and inattention. *What* was this Fred Massingberd,—*who* were these Cobhams,—to whom accident might assign so much influence? The young man might be half a foot shorter than her son, and yet dangerous. The Cobhams?—There was no saying what mischiefs might not be concentrated in the Cobhams!—

Sir James, as well as she could recollect, was a sporting man,—a rider of steeple-chases. He was perhaps a gambler,—perhaps on the turf! Lady Cobham belonged, she was pretty nearly sure, to the class of pretty young married Englishwomen who drive about with a carriage-full of nurses and children covered with lace frills and huge cockades, in whom they invest their vanity rather than in their own silken ringlets and delicate complexions. But she might be mistaken. Instead of one of these gentle nonentities, Lady Cobham *might* be a designing coquette; and though there was no unmarried sister in the case, *who* was to insure her against a young cousin or a pet friend?—The Countess resolved at once upon a violent taste for Mont Blanc and the mer de glace; or, if the German Spas were to be the order of the summer, she had as much right to be ordered to Baden or Töplitz as any member of the Massingberd family. She must not, at such a critical moment, lose sight of the Earl!—

It was some relief to her fears that, on the morrow, she experienced no opposition from

Hugo. Young Greville's heart was yet warm with the joy of his return to the mother from whom he had borne so long a separation. All the little presents collected for her on his travels, were accepted with even more than her usual graciousness. Never had he seen her so affectionate,—so ingratiating.—Never had he felt more strongly her claims upon the time and tenderness of the only son to whom her own had been exclusively devoted. As yet, indeed, he was unconscious that such claims could ever become importunate, for as yet no tie existed to interfere with their exercise; and he accordingly announced to Massingberd that his mother was anxious to join their travelling party, as if affording a considerable addition to its pleasures.

“Your *mother*, my dear fellow?”—exclaimed Fred, as much amazed as if he had been threatened with the company of the lady of Loretto, or her of Hill Hall.—“And what the deuce are we to do with her?”—

“She will have her own carriage and servants,” replied Greville, “as the Cobhams

theirs; and you and I can travel in my *dormeuse*."

"Of course;—but think of the *gêne* of the thing!—At Rome, — at Florence, — Milan, — Paris, — everywhere, — we shall be so cursedly hampered with all these petticoats!—Julia we might easily throw over; Cobham is bound to take care of *her*.—But think of beauing about Lady Greville all the way from St. Peter's to St. Paul's!—My dear boy, you don't know what you have undertaken!"—

Greville's cheeks were suffused for a moment. Eton and Oxford had done something towards habituating him to the brazen slang of the day. But it was nearly two years since he left college, and under no circumstance had he heard the name of his mother thus roughly approached. Still, it was difficult to be angry with his cool off-hand friend.

"I perceive you have forgotten my mother, or you would not talk of her as an incumbrance. She is twice as young and handsome as the General's wife to whom I saw you paying such

assiduous court at Valetta," said he, with a smile.

"Ask the Cobhams!"—

"I beg your pardon;—I remember her perfectly.—I have a distinct recollection of the cold proprieties of our dinner, two winters ago, at Greville Abbey!"—cried Massingberd. "As to Julia, she was always frightened out of her wits at Lady Greville; and Cobham counts for nothing, as he hates all female society except that of his wife."

"Then I am afraid I must declare off from your party," was Lord Greville's resolute reply. "I have left my mother alone here all the winter to pursue my own diversions; and feel that I owe my summer to her, particularly so long as she remains abroad."

"You mean, in short, to attach yourself to mamma's apron-string for the remainder of your days!"—cried Massingberd, with a provoking laugh. "My dear Grev., I thought there was more bottom in you!—'Tis no fault of yours, of course, that your father's will makes you a blank in creation till five-and-twenty; but I fancied you had too much *nous* not to lengthen your leading-strings so as to make them hang easy."

“ My mother has taken care never to render them irksome,” replied Greville, frankly ; “ and I have therefore no excuse for thwarting her in matters of indifference.”

“ Matters of indifference ?”—cried Massingberd, shrugging his shoulders. “ Our expedition to Paris, a matter of indifference ?—Think of all the glorious fun we had promised ourselves !”—

“ And what occasion have we to break our promise ?—I mean to amuse myself to the utmost !”—

“ Amuse yourself ?—with a family party ?—under the eyes of its mamma ?—Better engage a travelling tutor at once ; or dismiss your courier, and hire the sec. of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, to keep our cash book !”—

Lord Greville laughed, for he saw that a laugh was expected. Still, he ventured to persist that it would be impossible to break his engagement with the Countess.

“ Not impossible,—only difficult,”—retorted Massingberd. “ At Rome, we will turn Lady Greville over to the Cobhams, and go forward

to secure accommodation for the party. Let us all start fair together, and leave the rest to me."

Fred Massingberd had, in fact, determined that a considerable portion of Lord Greville's arrangements should for the future be left to him. Idle, expensive, and dissolute, he taxed his father's resources to the utmost for the entertainment of his pleasant vices. The old gentleman was indulgent, weakly indulgent, to the excesses of the only son in whom his soul delighted. But an income of three thousand a year, hampered to pay off his daughters' fortunes and keep up his county respectability, could not afford a sufficiently liberal allowance for a young gentleman of Frederick's pretensions. Young Massingberd was fond of hunting, shooting, and yachting, hazard, champagne, and the opera; had his corner at Crockford's and in the omnibus, his name in the books of Cooke and Inkson, Adams and Forsyth. This was perhaps "pushing the duke" too far for the son of an Oxfordshire squire; and it naturally followed that he became shabby,

as a penalty for having pretended to be too fine.

In accepting his brother-in-law's proposal to spend the winter with them at Naples, he had been actuated rather by anxiety to keep out of the way of his Christmas bills and his father's indignation, than by any desire to visit the fine scenery of Italy. Cobham he considered a bore, except at his hunting box in Leicestershire, with a good stable at his disposal;—Julia, everywhere;—and when, at the close of an expedition to Malta, planned to get rid of his *ennui* in their society, he stumbled upon his country neighbour and Oxford chum, Lord Greville, the wandering roué saluted him as sent by the express hand of fortune to his relief.

There was much in the deportment of Masingberd to win the fancy of a very young and very reserved man. Fred was a man of ten years' knowledge of the world,—Fred had been a man from the day he set foot in Eton. He was now almost an old man, or, at least, an old dandy;—hard, insolent, jovial, and, of course, “the best fellow in the world.”

He was good looking, too, though described by Lady Greville as insignificant. Deficiency of stature was atoned by exquisite finish in his toilet and deportment. He was one of those whom ladies love to look on,—that is, very young ladies or very old ones,—lounging in the corner of a well turned-out cabriolet, or leaning superciliously against the door of a crowded ball-room.

Such was the worst of Fred Massingberd. The best was, that he was livelier than the average of nothings of the same class,—evermore floating on the surface of London society.

CHAPTER III.

Il n'est pas connoissable depuis qu'il me hante, ce peti homme. Il est vrai que je n'ai pas mon pareil pour débourgeoiser un enfant de famille !

REGNARD.

BETWEEN a positive old woman and a positive young man, the match is pretty nearly equal. Lady Greville was determined to take her departure from Naples in company with her son ; Fred Massingberd no less so that Lord Greville should not reach Milan in company with his mother. Both succeeded in their projects.

The English, though by nature less gregarious than other nations, are apt to become sociable on the highway. If fond of staying at home in

solitude, they delight to travel in parties ; and the Cobhams were accordingly enchanted with the idea of having the Countess of Greville and her son superadded to their caravan. It looked well in the road-books ; it would sound well at Cobham Park and Hill Hall ; to say nothing of the charming difficulties of having twelve pair of post-horses in request, and the certainty of sleeping in their carriages for want of beds, at more-than one country inn on the road.

Sir James and Lady Cobham, indeed, being people of fortune, made their tour as uncomfortable as people in independent circumstances have a right to do. Sir James was accompanied by an English butler, who “valeted” his master, and twice every day aggravated his discontents with hints of the impositions of the “rascal of a currier,” and grumbling against the privations of foreign diet ; while his lady was equally happy in the feuds and miseries of two English nurses and a lady’s-maid. Wherever they stopped for the night, squabbles and miscomprehensions set the whole establishment in an uproar ; and it was no great

stretch of candour on the part of Fred Massingberd to admit, before they quitted Rome, that the mild, well-bred Countess was a pleasanter travelling companion, than the pretty silly Julia, whose maternal solitudes were always in paroxysms ; or the sulky Baronet, who, fancying himself ill-used whenever his wife was not ready to give him her exclusive attention, was incessantly quarrelling with her out of pure conjugal affection.

“By Jove, what nuisances they all are !”—cried Massingberd, seizing Greville’s arm, as they sallied forth together, after one of those vain attempts to organize a party to the opera at Bologna, which characterize the insensibility of the English to dramatic entertainments. “Unless they are able to do exactly what they like in precisely their own way of doing it, they would rather sit at home grumbling at each other by way of *passe temps*. My dear fellow, this will never do ! For the love of mercy, make up your mind, or let me make it up for you, to be off for Paris to-morrow. Leave me to make our story good to Lady Greville, and I answer for her approval.”

And the approval of the Countess was given with so much plausible acquiescence in Massingberd's arguments, that even he, the worldly wise, little suspected she was growing anxious touching Sir James Cobham's discovery that Lord Greville was too young and too handsome, and his wife too young and too pretty, to render their nearer intimacy either safe or desirable.

Two days afterwards, the young men were *en route* for Florence ; and though Greville had stoutly denied to his companion that his mother's presence was ever the slightest restraint upon him, he was forced to admit, even to Fred, even to himself, that he *now* more fully appreciated the delights of an Italian tour. They visited Venice ; and uttered the usual *niaiseries*, concerning Byron, the Bridge of Sighs, Desdemona, and the Bravos I. and II. of Monk Lewis and Cooper. They spent a happy week among the gay coteries of Milan ; gossiped away their evenings at the Scala, and gossiped away their mornings talking of the preceding evenings. They loitered at Como ;—they lingered here, and idled there ;—and, while swearing to each

other fifty times a-day that nothing could exceed the beauties of Italy, animate and inanimate, found themselves gradually attracted across the frontier of the enchanting, though frightful country, which, as Stendhal hath it, "calls itself *la belle France*." On a warm evening early in May, the travellers found themselves yawning in each other's faces over an indifferent dinner, in a small inn in the little town of Dole.

"After all, they make a better *fricandeau* anywhere than in the mother country!" cried Fred, pushing aside a plateful of dry threads which he had accepted under the designation of that ubiquitous *plat*. "For Heaven's sake, my dear Grev., let this be our last stage to Paris. The weather is delicious,—your carriage twenty times easier to sleep in than the stuffy bed-room of a way-side inn. Two nights more, and we shall be comfortably lodged at the Bristol!"—

"I hate travelling all night when there is no occasion for it," replied Greville, who was beginning to discover that the selfishness of his particular friend was a more irksome burthen than the discreet authority of his mother.

“ But there *is* occasion for it, with such a world of enjoyment before us !” cried Massingberd,—and he forthwith began reciting aloud from a copy of the *Journal des Débats* that lay on the table, a rhapsody of Jules Janin upon the merits of the new ballet.

“ We may see it on Monday instead of Friday, I suppose, and survive the postponement,” replied Greville, carelessly.

“ By Heavens !—I do believe it is that cursed old brown Noah’s-ark of a travelling carriage that tempts you to dawdle thus on the road !” cried Massingberd, in a rage. “ I saw you looking down upon it, from the last *côte* we ascended this evening ; and if the old gentleman were half as clear-sighted as myself, or his daughters half as ——”

“ Hush—hush !”—interrupted Lord Greville, with anxious impatience,—“ they are lodged in the very next room.”

“ The devil they are !—I couldn’t understand what you and Giacchimo were whispering about so mysteriously, before dinner. Impart, my dear fellow, impart !—or expect nothing from my con-

federacy. What have you discovered?—Who are they?—Whither bound?—Milanese shopkeepers, eh?—or Russian princesses?—or—”

“Let me once more entreat you to moderate your voice,” said Greville, in a tone of repressed indignation;—“the partition is thin—”

“And you are afraid that the interesting young man in the white *paletot* will stand accountant for my noise and my nonsense!—Not a bit!—I have taken care, every time we met, since we crossed the frontier, that they should have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with my voice and character, as well as with your personal merits. *You* have stared, *I* have talked them out of countenance. On more occasions than one I—”

“You will talk me out of patience, if you persist in making such an infernal noise!”—interrupted Greville, perceiving that his companion’s volubility increased in proportion as the bottle of Verzenay by his side gradually diminished; and he felt that the calm, well-bred Countess of Greville would have been at that moment a more agreeable associate for his travels, than even the wittiest of *roués*.

“ Be candid, and *I* will be quiet !”—continued Massingberd, in his former elevated key. “ Tell me half you know, and you may command my whole discretion !—What is their courier’s story about them ?—and what is yours ?”—

“ Story ! God bless you, I have none to tell, Sir,”

replied Greville, finding it safer to humour than to oppose him. “ Giacchimo has discovered no more than we already knew ;—namely, that our charming neighbours are French.”

“ Indeed, I knew no such thing !”—

“ You might have made the discovery by the same means you are taking to apprise them that *we* are English—and brutes into the bargain ! I overheard the old gentleman giving his orders to the postilions in French that was not to be mistaken for any other than Parisian.”

“ Bah !—as if *you*—an Etonian, and never having set foot in Paris,—knew a word about the matter !—I dare say the old fellow’s *u* was as broad Italian as that of the most legitimate gobbler of maccaroni in the two Sicilies !”—

“ As you please ;—or as broad as your own assertion, which is as broad as it is long. How-

ever, as I do not intend to persecute my fair neighbours, of whatever nation, with the fumes of my cigar in addition to the noise of my companion, I shall hasten to enjoy my siesta in my own room."

"That is, you are going to lounge on the Place, in the hopes of a glimpse into their apartment," cried Massingberd, who was beginning to clip his words under the influence of champagne. "How the deuce, pray, are the fumes of your cigar to penetrate a wooden partition, sans crack or flaw, or door condemned or condemnable?—Go, and be ———, I spare you the participle, in deference to the ears of your lovely neighbours,—whether Parisian or Otaheitan.—Meanwhile, I bet you the first nap I ever had in my purse (and here it is) that I obtain more information concerning our fellow-travellers without budging from table, than you and Giacchimo together by your united eloquence, bribery, and corruption."

The bet was a drawn one. As Greville rose to quit the room, somewhat irritated by the noisy pertinacity of his friend, the loud clacking

of what he supposed to be a courier's whip and the galloping of a horse past the windows, which were on the ground-floor overlooking the inn-yard, distracted their attention ; and in another minute, the adjoining room emitted evidences of volubility quite as remarkable as those which he had checked in Massingberd.

Loud salutations uttered in a deep masculine voice, and exclamations of " My dear Gustave !" " My charming cousins !" were followed by a series of questions and answers, which clearly proved the travellers to be French, and proceeding to Paris from Italy, where they had been passing the winter for the benefit of the old gentleman, a Marquis, and an invalid ;—but whether the " belle Sophie" and " charmante Eugénie" apostrophized by the new comer were the said Marquis's daughters or nieces, remained doubtful. One thing was clearly established ; that, whatever might be the condition or politics of the travellers, Gustave was a Carlist colonel, living in retirement on his estate ; come by especial appointment for a passing interview with his cousins on their road

to the capital; and that unless he could persuade them to diverge from their route on the morrow to visit his château, Lord Greville and his friend were likely to meet them again and again as they proceeded.

“And what on earth takes you to Paris in such haste at this season of the year?”—demanded the Colonel, on finding slight hopes held out to him of the favour he had been soliciting.

“We have much business to settle, after six months’ absence,” replied the feeble voice of the Marquis, “previous to repairing to Les Etangs for the summer.”

“Where I earnestly hope you will come and visit us,” added the silver tones of one of the fair cousins; and the two young men, involuntary auditors of the conversation, could easily conjecture the smiling bow with which such an invitation must be accepted.

“Besides,” added the second female voice, “though the carnival and its balls are over, Paris is never pleasanter than during the month of May. It has become the fashion, you know, for the Faubourg to give its fêtes after Easter,

in order to distinguish them from the mobs of the ministerial and diplomatic circles."

"Then there are the charming breakfasts of the ambassadresses!"—added her sister.

"And our delightful drives in the Champs Elysées, and rides in the Bois de Boulogne!"—resumed the other.

"In short," cried the rough voice of the Colonel, "you evidently intend to offer me not only a reasonable excuse for your own expedition to Paris, but strong inducements to visit it myself."

"The coxcomb!"—burst involuntarily from the lips of Lord Greville and Fred Massingberd.

"Ay, do accompany us,—we have a fourth place for you in the carriage!"—added the querulous voice of the old gentleman. And it was no small relief to the listeners to find the invitation declined.

"Impossible, my dear sir!—I have too much on my hands, to say nothing of the dangers inevitable to me from such a journey."

And though Massingberd could suppose the

probability of political perils for the Carlist Colonel, Lord Greville instantly figured to himself the impertinent smile and glance towards one or other of his fair cousins, intending to assign to his speech a more gallant interpretation.

“ By Jove, we have no business to sit eaves’ dropping here !”—cried he, on observing that Fred Massingberd was still sober enough to take note of his changes of countenance. And finding his friend resolved not to vacate his position, the Earl was careful to cough so loudly as to advertize his neighbours that they were overheard. A confused whispering assured him that his hint was understood. The travellers kept travellers’ hours, and soon afterwards retired to rest.

On the morrow, Massingberd slept late, thanks to a severe headache consequent on his bottle of Verzenay ; and on inquiry, it proved that the party of the Marquis de Rostanges had departed at sunrise.

“ Never mind !—we shall be sure to overtake them !”—was the consolation of Massingberd to

his friend. But though pretending great eagerness to forward what he inferred to be Greville's wishes on the subject, the listless dandy contrived not to be ready for a start, till the heat of noon-tide rendered the road insupportable.

“Never mind !”—was still his cool apostrophe. “These people are doubtless wiser than ourselves ; and are pausing at some inn till sunset, to escape the *coup de soleil* with which poor Giacchimo is at this moment in imminent danger.”

Greville who, partly by nature partly by education, was an adept in that best of human philosophy, to bear and forbear, refrained from self-vindication ; resigning himself to his reveries without so much as noticing that the fumes of Fred Massingberd's cigar were now superadded to the suffocating dust of the road. He knew that “time and tide wear through the darkest day,” even when overclouded by the selfishness of a smoking friend ; or rather, he knew nothing just then, except that every hour and every stage brought them nearer to Paris ; and that the Paris which his companion regarded as a

wilderness, not exactly of monkeys, but of restaurants and theatres, was about to contain the grey-eyed Sophie and dark-haired Eugénie, whose graceful manners and elegant persons had produced so powerful an effect upon his imagination.

He fancied—a handsome young man of two and twenty might be excused for indulging in such fancies, more particularly since he had the discretion to keep them to himself,—that the attention of the fair travellers had been in some slight degree conceded to himself. Both had deigned to exchange a gentle salutation for the profound bow with which he passed them on the dirty staircase of the hotel at Dole. It was true, they could no less; but Greville discerned an indication of more than common civility in the gesture. One thing, however, sorely vexed him. It appeared that the Colonel had eventually accepted the fourth place in the brown Noah's ark, as proposed by the Marquis de Rostanges!—The Colonel (of whom he had been unable to secure a glimpse the preceding night, so as to determine the important question

of his personal advantages,) the Colonel, with all the easy assurance announced by his coarse volubility, was consequently at that moment seated side by side with the black or the grey-eyed cousin, and opposite to the other; while his own social enjoyments were limited to the gentle snore with which Massingberd now superseded the cigar.—Poor Greville!—

The heat of the day at length gave place to one of those calm dewy evenings which, unperceived by the traveller, extend their tranquillizing influence over the landscape, till

All the air a solemn stillness holds.

The twilight of early May, particularly in the south, is the most fragrant and refreshing hour of the twenty-four; and Greville, lost in his own thoughts, and the enjoyment of a rising breeze, began to rejoice that he had acceded to Massingberd's proposal to travel through the night.

The carriage had been tediously ascending a long steep hill, to which the straight direction of the road afforded no relief; when, as they reached

the brow, commanding, had there been daylight to reveal its horizon, an extensive tract of country, Lord Greville's ears were saluted by the sudden and vehement ejaculations of Giacchimo, who had been preceding them on foot.

"*Santissimo Dio!*—what a terrible sight!"—cried he; and the two postilions, startled by his exclamations, as they stopped for him to resume his place in the rumble, soon added a chorus of imprecations to his deep solo.

"What in the devil's name is the matter?" cried Massingberd, starting up, rubbing his eyes, and instantly drowning, with unmeaning oaths, the mild interrogations of Lord Greville.

"A fire—a terrible fire!"—cried Giacchimo, aghast.

"One of our wheels fired?"—exclaimed Massingberd, scarcely yet awake, and incapable of imagining a misfortune in which he had no share.

"No, no!"—replied Lord Greville, who, having hastily alighted, was standing with Giacchimo on the brow of the *côte*. "Below yonder,—in the valley!—By Jove, how the flames are bursting forth!"—

“ Some hay-rick,—some hovel ! ”—cried Massingberd. “ For God’s sake, my dear fellow, get in again, and let’s be off. We have lost ten minutes, while yonder fellows were *sacréeing* away their salvation ! ”—

But Lord Greville was too earnestly engaged in conversation with the postilions even to reply. As far as they could judge, they said, it must be the village of Grangeneuve that was in flames. They knew little of that part of the country; but one of them readily agreed to take off the horses, and ride with Lord Greville to the spot, leaving his companion with the carriage and its luggage, including Massingberd, who declared himself too much indisposed to stir with the view of rendering assistance to “ a pack of peasants, who would probably not so much as thank them for their pains.”

In another moment, they were galloping along a bye-road leading from the foot of the hill; guided towards the scene of danger rather by the lurid reflection of the conflagration, than by the local knowledge of the hero in jack-boots who had undertaken their pilotage. Every now and then, a fresh outburst of light served to

hasten their speed, by an announcement of the progress of the devouring element; but, as Gros Pierre was careful to announce as intelligibly as the rough gallop of his beast would allow, that Grangeneuve was a detached hamlet in the midst of coppices, and that, as the fire had occurred after the hour of the villagers retiring to rest, the inhabitants were probably already burnt in their beds, there was little to encourage their enterprise.

On reaching Grangeneuve, however, they had the mortification to find the little knot of cabins of which it was composed as fast and dark as if nothing extraordinary were occurring!—Not a soul was stirring; even the dogs scarcely roused themselves to utter a feeble bark as the horses of Lord Greville and his noisy companion clattered along the causeway.

“*Nom de Dieu!* this is worse and worse!—It must be the château!—yet I could have sworn that the château lay a league further in the valley,”—cried Gros Pierre.

“Are we, at least, in the right road?”—exclaimed Lord Greville, on perceiving that the

fierce reflection of the fire upon the sky rather increased than diminished.

“Quite right!—keep to the left after passing the brook, and we shall be on the spot in fifteen minutes,”—cried the postilion. “*Sacristie!* to think that I should never have recollected the château!—On, on! *mon bon M’sieur!*—there may be life and death in the matter!”—

“At least, let us rouse the inmates of the village and obtain their assistance for the sufferers,”—cried Lord Greville. And this prudent suggestion having been attended to, and attended *with* all the tedious explanations consequent upon rousing up at dead at night sleepers oppressed by the labours of the day, Lord Greville hastened onwards in the direction pointed out. He soon needed no other guide than the reddening flames to suggest his way.

Within half-an-hour of quitting the high-road, Lord Greville was foremost in a group of terrified and disheartened servants, who were awkwardly attempting to fix a crazy ladder, procured with difficulty from a neighbouring grange, to the upper story of a large, rambling country

mansion, scarcely deserving the name of château, so closely was it incorporated with a farmhouse, already more than half destroyed by the fire which had originated under its roof, and which threatened destruction to the whole edifice.

“ I tell you ’tis useless ! ”—cried one of the assistants to the new comers, “ the flooring *must* have fallen in by this time.—If there had been any hope of saving the poor old gentleman, do you think my master the Colonel would not have been the first to propose attempting the window ? ”—

“ Colonel d’Aramon is desperately hurt himself,” added another ; “ his clothes were scorched nearly off his back as he rushed a second time through the flames with one of the ladies in his arms.”

But the startling intelligence thus conveyed was lost upon Lord Greville. Having reached the scene of action fresh and excited, while the rest of the assistants were overpowered, and in some instances injured, by previous exertion, he did not hesitate to rush up the ladder, now

firmly planted by the aid of Gros Pierre and the stragglers reaching the spot from Grange-neuve, towards the window pointed out by the crowd as affording the only chance of escape for some individual sleeping within. To crash the window-frame, fortunately unprotected by shutters, and burst into the room, was the work of a moment ; and though the shouts accompanying the heroic ascent of the young stranger were a moment suspended by anxiety as he disappeared from their eyes, it was some relief to the panic of the moment that no flames burst forth from the broken window to announce that the expectations of the spectators were realized, and that the fire was raging in the upper story.

Still, moments elapsed, even minutes, and those prolonged by the intense anxiety of the still increasing throng ;—but the stranger who had so unaccountably dropped from the clouds to hazard his life for the sake of persons unknown, re-appeared not !—

“ He is lost !—he is suffocated by the smoke ! ”
—cried Gros Pierre and his companions.—
“ God have mercy upon his soul ! ”—

“*Who* is lost,—*who* is suffocated?”—exclaimed the authoritative voice of a gentleman, who now rushed breathless upon the terrace whereon the ladder had been fixed.

“A stranger,—a brave young foreign traveller, who hurried hither from the high-road on discovering the fire,”—replied one of the servants.

“Bah!—you are dreaming!”—cried the breathless gentleman, almost beside himself with agitation and alarm.

“It is not five minutes since he mounted the ladder and entered the old Marquis’s bedroom!”—interposed a stable-boy, “as Gros Pierre here, who brought the gentleman and other succours with him from Grangeneuve, can attest.”

“Ay! and I heartily wish we had all tarried behind,”—growled the postilion; “for I have been the means of making an untimely end of as noble a gentleman as ever backed a horse; and small thanks to him, it seems, for his generous spirit! But by the Blessed Lady and all her Saints he shan’t die like a dog, while we

stand wondering at his folly !—If help may yet avail—”

And the postilion began disencumbering himself of his jack-boots, with the intention of ascending the ladder in his turn and penetrating into the interior of the fatal apartment ; when, with an angry oath, the Colonel commanded him to desist.

“ If he ever entered the room, as you assert, he left it safely by the door, and descended the stone staircase, which the fire has not yet reached, and down which I conducted the Marquis de Rostanges ten minutes ago !”—cried he. “ All the fellow has done is the mischief of letting in a current of air through yonder broken windows.—But why do we stand talking here, while the flames are making their cursed way to the farm ?—Follow me, friends ! By tearing down an outhouse or two, we may still save the granaries of poor Caudebec !”

Thus satisfied of the safety of the intrepid stranger, the villagers, shouting and excited, followed the agitated proprietor of the blazing pile towards the farm-yard, which presented a

painful scene of danger and desolation. With considerable risk and peril, the farmer and his men were attempting to drag the terrified horses from their stables. Poultry fluttering and screaming with terror,—cattle, dogs, and all sorts of domestic animals, startled and suffering, yet spell-bound, as it were, to the spot,—added to the confusion of the assistants.

It was only Gros Pierre who silently disobeyed the summons of the Colonel. He was not satisfied with the summary manner in which the safety of his young patron had been taken for granted ; and loitered behind, anxiously surveying the ladder and the broken windows, murmuring imprecations between his teeth against the selfishness of all proprietors of burning houses, who are content to see human beings roasted like ducks or chickens, for the chance of saving a measure of corn or an old bedstead.

Ere he had half vented his indignation, a smart blow upon the shoulder induced him to hazard a yet rounder oath ; which changed to a cry of joy when he beheld the handsome young

traveller, safe and sound, though somewhat blackened and disfigured by his transit through the château.

“Praise be to God!—I thought the Colonel was making a fool of me!”—cried Gros Pierre, seizing Greville heartily by the hand, and giving it a cordial shake. “You are one of the right stuff, whoever you are, and I knew as much the moment I saw you in your saddle. You ride like a man,—and you behave like a man, which is more than one can say of all gentlemen, with the Colonel yonder at the head of ’em.—To think that I should have lent a hand to sending you on a fool’s errand up this cursed crazy old ladder, where you hazarded breaking your neck, without the possibility of being of use to any mortal breathing!”—

“The people seem bewildered by so much confusion,—so much danger,”—replied Greville. “The Marquis de Rostanges was in safety, I find, before I entered his room.—No matter! We are none of us the worse for the attempt; and every inhabitant of the farm and château is happily forthcoming.”

“Ay, ay!—no further danger except for the granaries!”—cried Gros Pierrre. “If you’re not tired of serving those who have not even the grace to thank you, *mon bon M’sieur*, come round with me into the *basse cour*, and—”

“Can you direct me to find the chapel?”—inquired Greville in his turn.

“The chapel!”—reiterated Gros Pierre. “Is there a chapel attached to the Château de Grangeneuve?”—

And on finding how little he had to hope of information from the postilion, Lord Greville, leaving the granaries and the pigeon-house to their fate, pushed his way through a quincunx of sycamores from which he had seen the Colonel emerge previous to their hurried encounter a few minutes before; and was not long in finding his way to a barn-like edifice surmounted by a cross standing at a few hundred yards from the extremity of the terrace, the door of which was ajar.

A sound of lamentation greeted him in the porch; kneeling on the threshold of which were two or three peasant-girls attached to the service

of the chateau, whose loud prayers and louder outcries rendered almost inaudible the reiterated inquiries of the young Earl after the Marquis de Rostanges and his family. The flames were now so far abated, that the uncertain light glimmering through the narrow windows of the chapel rendered it difficult to ascertain the exact number or nature of its inmates ; nor was it till after repeated demands, that he could obtain the attention of the terrified damsels nearest the door so far as to learn that "*ces dames*" were in prayer at the foot of the altar.

Anxiously but timidly penetrating into the interior of the little chapel, Lord Greville had the satisfaction to perceive the old gentleman leaning on the shoulder of one of his lovely companions, while the other knelt weeping by their side.

Scarcely half-a-dozen words passed between the parties ;—but of a nature to satisfy Lord Greville's mind that they were safe,—unhurt ;—that they were aware of the risk he had undergone for their sake ;—and that he was accepted as a friend for life !—

CHAPTER IV.

Tour à tour, insouciant comme un enfant et pensive comme une femme, étourdie le matin et le soir mélancolique, pétulante jusqu'à la folie ou sérieuse jusqu'à la gravité, docile à la tempête mais reflétant l'instant après la sérénité du ciel, elle offrait un de ces types ondoyans et complexes, devant lesquels les bourgeois s'arrêtent avec défiance, et les artistes avec amour.

BERNARD.

“ My dear fellow, what would you have?—I remained there starving on the crown of the causeway till nearly two o'clock in the morning!”—cried Fred Massingberd, in answer to the remonstrance of Greville. “ We then saw that the flames had subsided, and that all danger was past. The postilion was beginning to grumble, (though Giacchimo promised him a

handsome *pourboire*.) And the end of it was, that I recollected you would be sure to make your way here to the post station, instead of expecting to find us star-gazing on the road till you saw fit to return from your mad expedition. So we stopped the first pair of return-horses,—*et me voilà*.”—

“ I certainly did not expect to find you quietly in bed, while uncertain whether we were dead or alive!”—cried Greville. “ And if I hoped to find the carriage where I left it, ’twas because it is wanted for the immediate conveyance hither of Madame de Rostanges and her sister.”

“ Madame de *whom* ?”—

“ Madame la Marquise de Rostanges, her husband, and sister,—the inmates of the château which was all but consumed last night,”—replied the Earl.

“ A Marquise ?—a château ?— And so you have actually been making a *héros de roman* of yourself while I was smoking my cigar unsuspectingly by the road-side !”—cried Massingberd, at length startled from his pillow. “ ’Pon

my soul, Grev., this was stealing a march upon me with a vengeance !”

“ You did not choose to bear me company—”

“ You did not choose to tell me the real object of your enterprise !”—

“ I suppose it will be useless to say or swear, to a pagan like yourself, that when I left you I had not the remotest suspicion whither, or to whose relief, I was hastening. One of those strange freaks of fate which sometimes occur out of the pages of a romance, enabled me to be of service to persons in whom I feel, I admit, an unaccountable interest.”

“ As if you had not bribed the mayor of the village, or some other notable of the place, to play Guy Fawkes with the old château,—that you might do a little bit of romantic by extinguishing the flames with the gardener’s watering pot !”—cried Massingberd, shuffling on his dressing-gown, as he rose hastily from bed.

“ I have no time to brag of my exploits just now,” cried Greville, good-humouredly. “ I disturbed you only to say that the carriage is at the door to proceed to Grangeneuve, for the

use of the Marquis de Rostanges's family ; the brown Noah's-ark having been too much injured by the fire to be of further use."

" And what the deuce, then, is to become of them and *us* ?"—cried Massingberd, with an air of consternation.

" As soon as they have recovered their fatigue and alarm, they will resume their journey ?"

" To Paris ?—in our carriage ?"—

" To Paris,—in my carriage. *We* can easily find places in the first diligence," replied the Earl.

" Easily enough—but not easy places."—

" Do you think such accommodation better suited, then, to Madame de Rostanges and her sister ?"—

" What are Madame de Rostanges and her sister to *me* ?—I never beheld them till four days ago, and don't care if I never see them again !—The diligence !—pah !—What a nuisance women are, from the moment they set their feet out of their own houses !"—muttered the dandy.

" I can't stay to fight the battles of the sex

just now," cried Greville; "but I have no doubt Madame de Rostanges and the dark-eyed Eugénie will add their thanks to mine, if you bestir yourself to have an excellent breakfast ready for us on our arrival."

And he was off before Massingberd had time to acquiesce or remonstrate.

The morrow of a midnight fire necessarily presents a scene of desolation; whether its ravages have swept through the palace or the cottage,—whether the interests of the arts or the sober realities of humble life are sacrificed by the catastrophe. At Grangeneuve, though the lamentations of every village within many leagues round were in request to bewail the calamity of Farmer Caudebec and the brave Colonel d'Aramon, there was less cause for despair than on most similar occasions. No loss of life or limb,—not so much as a horse or cow sacrificed;—and the property so far insured as to preserve the poor Caudebec from the ruin usually consequent for the poor on such a misfortune.

Still, nothing could exceed the wretchedness

of the houseless family, or the desolation of the spot. The terrace of the château, with its pretty adjoining flower-gardens, was strewn with wrecks of the farmer's humble household furniture, which had been removed thither as to a place of security. Even the façade of the château, with its broken windows, and the eastern wing connecting it with the farm, scorched and defaced by the flames, looked sufficiently disconsolate, Lord Greville could scarcely refrain from a smile at the pompous care with which Colonel d'Aramon exclusively pointed out, as they visited the spot together, the dreadful havoc *his* property had undergone.

“But yesterday, Sir, the Château de Grange-neuve was one of the prettiest things in the whole Canton,” said he. “You see it in miserable disorder ;—the vases overthrown from their pedestals,—the parterres trampled down,—and my poor terrace disgraced by all this trumpery !—Yet, I again assure you, Sir, that yesterday, when my charming cousins drove into the court-yard, Mademoiselle de Nangis admitted she had seen

nothing more enchanting in her travels than the site of the Château de Grangeneuve !”

Lord Greville replied only by a polite bow ; secretly of opinion that either Mademoiselle de Nangis’s better judgment was blinded by family prejudices, or that her understanding must be strangely at variance with her intellectual cast of countenance.

“ I have vainly attempted, Sir, to persuade the Marquis to defer his departure till to-morrow,” resumed the Colonel. “ The château, Heaven be thanked, has escaped without material injury ;—and I could still establish them so comfortably that it would be far wiser not to attempt the journey till recovered from the fatigues of last night. However, they will not be persuaded ;—they are too scrupulous. They are apprehensive, Sir, of adding to my anxieties at such a crisis ;—and I am reluctantly compelled to submit to their decree.”

To Greville’s great relief, Colonel d’Aramon now escorted him into a saloon, whose uncarpeted brick-floor and worm-eaten furniture of faded tapestry, appeared to English

eyes very little superior to the household goods of the poor farmer which encumbered the terrace. The Colonel, however, evidently thought otherwise—

Stately stepped he east the ha'
And stately stepped he west,

while expressing his regrets that untoward circumstances should prevent his welcoming an English visitor with becoming honours;—pointing out to the stranger with a pompous wave of the hand the fine prospect visible from the uncurtained windows, as he proceeded to marshal him into a small chamber occupying one of the turrets flanking the château, in which, in anxious expectation of his arrival, sat Madame de Rostanges, her husband, and sister. They made no secret of their joy on seeing him again.

“I was afraid you might be tempted to desert us!”—cried Mademoiselle de Nangis; a deep blush succeeding to the paleness and languor produced by the terrors of the preceding night; while Madame de Rostanges, acknowledging

Lord Greville's salutations by a gentle smile, turned towards the Marquis with a whispered ejaculation of—"I told you so!—There was nothing to fear!—I was certain he would keep his promise!"—

"My carriage awaits your orders in the court-yard," said he, abruptly addressing Monsieur de Rostanges; "accompanied by a *cabriolet de poste* for the use of your servants. Everything is prepared for your reception at the inn. Surely you cannot too speedily enable these ladies to enjoy the rest and refreshment of which they stand so much in need?"—

Still bewildered by the dreadful event which had placed him in fear, if not in peril of his life, Monsieur de Rostanges, a gentlemanly valetudinarian, about sixty years of age, was evidently puzzled between the civilities due to the kinsman to whom their visit had proved so signal a misfortune; and those owing to the distinguished young foreigner who, as the lady's-maid had been just declaring to Mademoiselle de Nangis, "*se mettait en quatre pour leur rendre service.*" He became confused in his apologies

to the Colonel, for having been the means of burning down his house, (the *fermière* having dinned into the ears of the family that the fire arose from the over-heating of her ovens in baking *pains de gruau* for the guests;) and to the Milor, for being the means of turning him out of his carriage, (Giacchimo, who was reluctantly in attendance, having pointed out that his lordship was on horseback, to avoid being an incumbrance to the party.) Nor was it till Eugénie de Nangis, who sometimes assumed the privileges of girlhood with her grave brother-in-law, took the liberty of reminding him that they were increasing the embarrassment of all parties by so much ceremony, that he could be prevailed upon to make his final bow.

Nothing could be more amusing than the air of magnanimity with which Monsieur de Rostanges lifted his hat in acknowledgment of the cheers raised by the poor Caudebecs and their people, as the handsome English travelling carriage was jolted over the wretched pavement out of the court-yard. Little did he suspect

that the compliment was an effort of gratitude towards Greville, whose liberalities had been promptly and nobly dispensed to the sufferers from the fire. The Marquis had done nothing; they were not "his people." It was no affair of his. He had fulfilled his duty by dropping an offering into the poor's box of the chapel;—not so much as an aid to the needy of this world, as to testify his gratitude to Heaven for his own preservation from destruction.

If the prolixity of Monsieur de Rostanges proved an annoyance to poor Colonel d'Aramon, who was beginning to find that the honour of affording a night's hospitality to two pretty cousins might be dearly purchased, to Fred Massingberd the evil was of a still more crying nature;—for the time passed on, and no travellers appeared. The excellent breakfast that was spoiling,—the over-boiled coffee,—the over-stewed *matelotte*,—the forgotten cutlets,—the cold brioche!—It was too provoking that the quiet, reserved Greville, hitherto so positive in his views of human enjoyment, should

have chosen the moment of their journey to develop his capabilities as a hero of romance!—

“ From the moment I set eyes on that cursed old brown Noah’s ark, I foresaw mischief!” muttered Frederick, as he stood watching from the window of the Golden Lion the coming of Greville’s carriage along the dusty high-road; as eagerly as in the month of September, in London, he would have watched from Crockford’s window the transit of the only stray carriage extant in the metropolis. “ After having got rid of all those bores of women at Rome, to run one’s head into such a viper’s nest as this! A Frenchwoman out of Paris is the devil; and two of them, (and a soubrette, neither young nor pretty, for that portion of the Noah’s ark fell under my especial cognizance,) to drive one out of one’s wits, and into the *Messageries Royales*! —By Jove, Greville is old enough to know better!—His mother is right—he is not fit to be trusted out of her sight.—How could I be such an ass as to let him gallop off on that fool’s errand last night.—What the deuce had

an English peer to do at a village fire in Burgundy?—*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère !*—

Poor Frederick had only one resource for his ill-humour,—the English dandy's universal stronghold of defence:—he would be *fine* ! When these troublesome foreigners arrived, they should obtain no advantage over *him*. He would make it so apparent how greatly he and his travelling companion were inconvenienced on their account, that they must be compelled to decline the accommodation offered.

Nevertheless, when the party eventually made its appearance, even the cool, self-possessed Fred Massingberd found it impossible to persevere in his intentions. Not only the overstrained obsequiousness of the host of the Golden Lion, overjoyed at having such unlooked-for victims to prey upon as a party of travellers, including a cheatable English Milor and a cheating Italian courier, but the high-bred courtesy of the Marquis, rendered any attempt at ungraciousness impossible. Neither the gentle smiles of Madame de Rostanges, nor the piquant glances

of her sister, would have disarmed his dandyism. But the graceful bow of the gentleman of the old school overpowered the insolence even of St. James's Street.

Nor were his attempts at exquisitism less completely frustrated. Having resolved, since he must not mark his contempt of the intruders, to shew his consciousness of superiority by sneering at the miserable accommodations of the Golden Lion, and turning to a jest the heroism of Greville and the bloodless perils of the preceding night, his wit fell pointless; for the fair Parisians were deeply and piously grateful for their escape from dangers which they still shudderingly declared to have been imminent; and their earnest declarations of obligation to their new friend were uttered in a tone that admitted of no flippant rejoinder.

“ Poor Grev. !—They have found him out !—He is a marked man !—Giacchimo has been chattering, and it is all over with Greville Abbey !”—was Massingberd's secret monologue. “ Already they perceive how soft he is, and have booked him for a victim. Which wins the

day,—black eyes or blue?—the married beauty or the single?—By Jove, I shall be curious to see how matters turn out!”

But, like other individuals overripened by the precociousness of the age, Fred Massingberd was too shrewd by half. So far from having found out Lord Greville, that is, found him out as a man enjoying high advantages of birth and fortune, Madame de Rostanges having encountered in her Italian tour certain young English lordlings of a very different tone of conduct and character, had taken it into her head that Greville was the travelling-companion or poor relation of the dandified Fred; while as to Eugénie, she was so overpowered by the *attaques de nerfs* she had experienced the preceding night, that all the houses of peers of all Europe might have been present, without exciting much attention. She had scarcely found time even to notice with disgust the hard stare with which she was honoured by the young gentleman who discussed so learnedly the seasoning of cutlets and saucing of matelottes, before she begged permission to retire with her sister for

the repose and quiet of which they stood so much in need.

When, late in the day, Madame la Marquise and the lovely Eugénie emerged from their chamber, refreshed in spirit, to tender to their English friends the acknowledgments in which they felt themselves to have been previously deficient, Lord Greville and Massingberd were gone; and the travelling carriage of the Earl was at the door, packed and prepared for the continuance of their journey.

“ *Ces Messieurs* would not hear of your being disturbed to receive their adieux,” said the Marquis, in reply to Eugénie’s eager interrogations. “ They had an opportunity of engaging the coupé when the diligence stopped to change horses, which was not to be neglected. D’Aramon, who was here at the time, (having ridden over an hour ago to see that we were properly attended to, and obtain the attendance of the Sous Préfet to preside over the *procès verbal* of the fire,) strongly advised them not to lose so eligible an opportunity.”

“ How very provoking !—how very officious !”

burst at the same moment from the lips of both sisters.

“ We had really no opportunity to express our sense of his disinterested kindness !” added Madame de Rostanges. “ I am assured by Adèle, who witnessed the scene, that at the moment this young man ascended to the apartment in which you were supposed to lie in imminent danger, not another person could be found to hazard the attempt.”

“ D’Aramon assures me, however, that the enterprise was quite gratuitous,” replied the Marquis, somewhat drily.

“ As it proved,” hastily interrupted Eugénie de Nangis. “ But Colonel d’Aramon was not on the spot,—Colonel d’Aramon saw nothing of the matter !—He was too much occupied with the preservation of his goods and chattels to trouble himself unnecessarily with—”

“ Be just, amid all your enthusiasm, my dear Eugénie,” interrupted Monsieur de Rostanges, in his turn. “ D’Aramon, in spite of his roughness, the best fellow breathing, had seen us all in safety before he gave a moment’s thought to the care of his property.”

“ He was indeed most kind, most considerate ; and I shall never cease to regret the consequence of our unlucky acceptance of his hospitality,” interposed Madame de Rostanges. “ But I should be sorry to find him underrate the services of our English friend.”

“ No doubt Colonel d’Aramon took occasion to insinuate to Monsieur de Gréville, as well as to yourself, that his attempt at your rescue from the flames last night was a mere act of Quixotism !”—cried Eugénie, impatiently. “ Really, *ce cher cousin* has vegetated in his retreat yonder at Grangeneuve till he seems to have lost all sense of the claims of society, or of common politeness.”

“ He has not lost his sense of the claims of kindred, as his ill-fated hospitality to us avouches,” remonstrated the Marquis. “ However, I will waste no further time in fighting his battles. All that remains for us is to make the best of our way to Paris ; where occasions will not be wanting to testify to the English gentlemen thrown so opportunely in our way at this unlucky juncture, the sense we entertain of their courtesy.”

The word “courtesy” grated on the ears of Madame de Rostanges and her sister. Their feelings were still warm, their imaginations still exalted, by the enthusiasm natural to their sex on such occasions as the incident which had brought about their acquaintance with Lord Greville. Had he been a person of ordinary attractions,—had he been even ugly, old, repellent,—they must have been touched by his generous exertions in their behalf. But there was every excuse for the exaggeration of their feelings in the graceful deportment, indicative of refinement and high station, for which Greville was remarkable. They were vexed that he should have quitted them without adieu; vexed that he should have so readily resigned their society for that of the fastidious dandy, to whom they already assigned his real value in comparison with that of his less ostentatious companion.

“He has shaken us off somewhat cavalierly,” was Sophie’s whispered observation to her sister, as they preceded Monsieur de Rostanges into the carriage which now so commodiously replaced the brown Noah’s ark. “*N’importe !*—

in three more days, we shall be at home. It will then depend upon ourselves to testify our gratitude.—It will then depend upon ourselves to ascertain whether we have formed an extravagant estimate of the merits of our new friend.”

CHAPTER IV.

Strip a butterfly of its painted wings, and it becomes a grub.

BURTON.

“ ‘ *Alle gut, ende gut!* ’—as my blackguard used to say at Vienna when he shaved me without inflicting disfigurement on my noble chin!”—cried Fred Massingberd, extending himself at full length on one of the satin sofas of a handsome apartment in the Hotel des Princes, two days after the great event.—“ We are not so ill off here as I anticipated; and after all, one could not hope to be received at the Bristol or the Rhin, jolting to the door as we did in a filthy fiacre, with evident signs of having beastlified all

night in one of Laffitte and Caillard's abominable receptacles for wayfaring men."

"I have no doubt they would have given us their best rooms, had they chanced to be unoccupied; and the more readily at the Hotel de Bristol, since my mother and the Cobhams have written to retain apartments," replied Lord Greville.

Massingberd, on receiving this intelligence, looked as if perfectly reconciled to the destiny which had settled them at the Hotel des Princes!

"I have already despatched Giacchimo to order our dinner at Véry's, and to secure stalls at the opera," said he, yawning.

"They spoke of having an excellent table-d'hôte in the house," said Lord Greville, looking at his watch.

"The best in Paris, which ought to be the best in the world," answered his friend.—"But the best table-d'hôte in the world must still be the nastiest thing in nature,—a *réchauffée* of *plats* and people not acceptable elsewhere. . No, no, Grev.,—no table-d'hôtes an' thou lovest me! To-morrow, I will get your name down at the

Union and Jockey Clubs. I should have dined at the Union to-day, had you been a member."

"Let me be no restraint upon you ;—I shall be quite satisfied with the nearest café," said Greville, with an air of unconcern.

"Don't talk so like a Hottentot !—Have you no palate, or, at all events, no sense of decency ? —I see I must take care of your health and morals, or I shall find you eating dirt (*not* Orientally speaking) at one of the horrible *restaurants à vingt-cinq sous*, where the public is poisoned in cold blood, with extenuating circumstances. But here comes Giacchimo with the bulletin of our pleasures for the evening."

Great was the disappointment of Massingberd on learning that the Italian Opera had been closed for several weeks; the company having performed its annual migration to London. At the French Opera, not a box or stall was to be had !—

"There will be a good box on the second tier the week after next; and next week, perhaps, *des stalles d'orchestre*," was all the consolation afforded by the emissary who accompanied the courier; and Fred, who in London carried

himself at the Opera as if a part-proprietor of the establishment, and who fancied it impossible for Cerito or Taglioni to dance unencouraged by his plaudits, was amazed to find that even the talisman of ready gold would do no more than enable him to cross the threshold of the Académie Royale, with the chance of finding a place in some upper box fifty feet above the level of the stage.

“It is the run of Meyerbeer’s new opera,” observed the agent. “On such occasions, the house is bespoken for ten or twenty representations; for the first few nights, the *bureau de location* was not even opened.”

“This would scarcely be believed in apathetic London,” said Greville, smiling at the irritation of his companion. “However, do not let us break our hearts about it, with so many other means of enjoyment within our reach.”

“Pray propose that we should go and amuse ourselves at the nearest *spectacle*, as you did that we should feed ourselves at the nearest *restaurant*!”—cried Fred, with an air of profound disgust.

“On the contrary,” replied Greville, good-

humouredly, "as you declare yourself to be shaken to pieces by the jolting of the infernal machine miscalled a diligence, I strongly recommend that you spend the evening on the sofa, or at your club, while I try to make out the whereabouts of the Hotel de Rostanges."

"Hotel de nonsense!"—exclaimed Massingberd, thoroughly out of sorts. "You will find the Marquis and his wife quietly lodged in some *troisième*—some third floor in the neighbourhood of the Rue de Bac;—that is, if they ever make it convenient to arrive and allow you the use of your own carriage."

"By your own account, they could not be in Paris before Wednesday. *Nous sommes à Lundi*. It is only idle curiosity that leads me in search of their habitation," muttered Greville.

"Idle curiosity, and the attraction of a pair of the bluest eyes that ever vied with a Neapolitan sky!" cried Massingberd.

And though pretending to turn a deaf ear to the insinuation, it was probably because apprehensive of having the jest carried further than he desired, that Greville took up his hat, an-

nouncing his intention of lounging upon the Boulevarts till it was time to repair to Véry's to dinner.

A lounge on foot upon the Boulevarts was a thing quite out of Massingberd's way at any time.—But to appear there, or in any other public place, in the present disorganized state of his toilet, was not to be thought of. Not a movement, not a measure of Fred Massingberd's was attempted without reference to the effect it was likely to produce. Though a complete egotist, he did nothing with an exclusive view to his exclusive enjoyment ; or, rather, he placed his exclusive enjoyment in figuring to advantage in the eyes of the world. He was, in fact, one of those useless excrescences of the present highly artificial state of society, which may be compared with the newly-acquired race of orchidaceous plants ;—curious weeds, the growth of a noxious climate, and requiring the waste of a fortune to maintain the factitious state of atmosphere essential to their existence.

“ How gay—how inspiring—how different from the pompous dulness of England ! ”—was

Lord Greville's exclamation, as, sallying forth from the Rue de Richelieu, he turned the angle of the Boulevard des Italiens; and who ever pursued his way along that varying and brilliant causeway, without indulging in a similar exclamation?—The stream of well-dressed people pressing towards the west end of the town, the cheerful countenances, the handsome equipages, the glittering cafés, the splendid shops, and, above all, the general air of life, movement, vivacity, and prosperity, the *gaieté de cœur* of the lower classes, and the *entrainement* of the higher, conspire to adorn a scene “able to cure all sadness but despair!”—

Even the sun seems to shine more brightly on the Boulevarts of Paris than elsewhere; owing, probably, to the dazzling whiteness of its houses, and the number of gaudy objects reflecting back from its gay magazines the gladness of day. Above, balconies of flowers, Genoese blinds, gilded balustrades, rising story above story; below, windows composed of single panes of plate-glass, giving to view the rich treasures of the jeweller, the parti-coloured luxuries of the

confectioner, or the gay streamers of the haberdasher, form the chief attraction to the stranger; who sees ladies of fashion in the well-dressed women seated in rows of chairs under the trees overshadowing the front of the Café de Paris, and men of fashion in the overdressed adventurers congregated before Tortoni's door, or haunting the environs of the Bourse.

But to the resident Parisian, or the foreigner *de`bon ton* using the Boulevarts only as a road between the clubs, the Champs Elysées, and Bois de Boulogne, there exists the further satisfaction of noting as they pass the equipages of the great and gay; of exchanging salutations with friends, and glances angry or contemptuous with foes. For this, Greville was of course still disqualified. He beheld cabriolets at least as well appointed as those of his Crockfordite friends, without conceiving who or what might be their showy proprietors; he passed the door of Madame Adde, without being aware that it differed from other flower-shops;—he looked at the gay *corbeilles* of Boissier, without suspecting how important a part they had to

play in the *histoire galante* of modern Paris. All he noticed was the general hilarity of the scene,—the elasticity of the air,—and, above all, their unaccountable influence upon his own heart and spirits.

Pursuing his cheerful way along the gay streets de la Paix and Castiglione,—the especial quarter of the English,—he entered, almost borne along with the throng, the gay gardens of the Tuileries.

It was the second week of May,—the month of blossoms, the month of verdure ;—when the over-arching lime-trees appear to be formed of one entire and perfect emerald, and the loftier masses of chesnuts are lightened by a shower of tufted bloom. On either side the stately alley leading from the gate towards the palace, sat triple rows of elegantly-dressed women, smiling and chatting ; while further on, towards the flower-gardens, which at that auspicious moment appeared clothed like *Peau d'Ane* with a robe of lilac-blossoms, were groups of happy children, laughing and skipping, having escaped their *bonnes* and flung away their bonnets to

enjoy under the shade of the green trees the freshness of the bursting spring.

All in that variegated scene was new and strange to Lord Greville. Among the white marble statues peeping from out the foliage, among the lovely women similarly environed, not a single accustomed object,—not a single familiar face!—A foreign language was breathed around him,—a foreign soil was under his feet. Yet he did not feel lonely,—he did not fancy himself an alien. In every other foreign country, a sense of strangeness appears to isolate the traveller;—in France, an universal air of gladness seems to say,—“be one of us—you are welcome!”—

Frederick Massingberd was provoked to almost more than his customary *brusquerie*, when, twenty minutes after the appointed time, Greville made his re-appearance at the hotel.

“We shall be deucedly late!”—said he. “The cabriolet has been half-an-hour at the door!”—

“As we have no one to dine with us, and as it is only at a café—” Lord Greville was beginning—

“ A *dîner de commande* at a first-rate *restaurant* is as sacred as in a private house !” interrupted his friend. “ They are ready to a second, and expect *us* to be the same.”

“ If *you* expected me to a second, I sincerely beg your pardon !” cried Greville, laughing. “ But it strikes me I have waited for you more than half-an-hour, before now,—and on more solemn occasions.”

“ But where on earth have you been ?”

“ Lounging about.—In Paris, they say, everyone becomes a *flaneur*.”

“ Yes, in a proper way. But not on foot,—not on the *pavé*,—not with the thermometer at 82.—Whom have you seen ?”

“ Whom ?—thousands of people.”—

“ People !—I mean, have you met anybody one knows ?”—

“ No one of *my* acquaintance ; yours is, of course, more extensive. You should have been with me, to account for some of the numberless pretty faces I saw for the first time.”

“ Then what in Heaven’s name detained you ?” persisted Fred, as he drove recklessly

down the Rue de Richelieu towards the Palais Royal.

“ The stupid wonder of a novice. I was inexpressibly pleased and amused by all I saw.”

“ My dear fellow, you must really be more cautious in yielding to such impressions,” said Massingberd, gravely. “ Remember, you are not known here ;—you have your way to make. An Englishman who has been seen neither at the Embassy nor the Union, who goes staring along the Boulevarts, and wanders alone among the nursery-maids in the Tuileries, incurs dreadful risk of being set down as a tiger.”

“ I am sadly afraid, then, that I have committed myself, and consequently *you*,”—cried Greville, laughing anew at his solemnity. “ Forgive me !—I shall know better in a day or two. Under your guidance, I trust I shall become thoroughly Parisianized by the time Madame de Rostanges and her sister arrive.”

“ I must first ascertain whether these Rostanges are people with whom one can associate,” replied Massingberd, checking his horse in a dark filthy street to the rear of the Palais Royal,

containing the private entrance to its principal *restaurants* and popular theatre, and encumbered with fruit-stalls, *gamins*, and *bouquetières*. And even Lord Greville, albeit unapt to play the fastidious, could not forbear noticing with disgust the filthiness of Véry's vestibule, crowded three parts of the year with oyster-women brandishing their knives, and the remaining portion with dirty *marmitons* shredding anchovies into unsightly heaps of very vermicular complexion.

“Not *here*—we are not going to dine in the *salon*!”—cried Massingberd, in a rage, as the garçon, with his skirtless jacket and white apron, shewed the way into a spacious saloon, whose widely-open windows overlooked the green alleys of the gardens of the Palais Royal, in which at that hour hundreds of persons were enjoying their newspaper and their *demie tasse*. “The dinner was ordered by my *courrier*. Shew us into our *cabinet*.”

It was in vain the civil waiter assured the indignant Massingberd that “the courier had said nothing of a *cabinet particulier*;—that the courier had probably supposed *ces messieurs*

would find it more cheerful in the public room than in a close little chamber.”—The dandy answered by a torrent of hybrid oaths, half English, half French; insisting that a cabinet should be instantly prepared to receive them. After a moment’s anxious colloquy with the *dame du comptoir*, to whom the insolent irritability of English exquisitism was probably familiar, they were entreated to wait a moment, while a lady and gentleman who were paying their bill made a hasty exit; and, instead of sitting down to the comfortable table prepared for them beside the open window, were shewn into a little stuffy closet looking towards the dirty, noisy street, strongly perfumed by the *pommes de terre à la Lyonnaise* and other savoury *plats* enjoyed by their predecessors.

“Here, we shall be completely to ourselves,—here, we shall be comfortable!”—cried Massingberd, as the *garçon* proceeded to disencumber a chamber, the size of a four-post bedstead, of the dirty plates and dirty tablecloth. “One could not possibly dine in that horrible *salon*,

—full of English—English of all sorts and conditions of vulgarity.”

“I saw several gentlemanly old Frenchmen look up from their dinners, surprised and disturbed by our sudden entrance and exit,” said Greville, taking up the Charivari while waiting for his *bisque d’ecrevisses*.

“*Chevaliers d’industrie*, most likely,” retorted Massingberd, in his usual tone of disparagement. “What wine shall we have?—some Comète Chablis?—No!—it is the Rocher which is famous for *that*.—We will try the Condriac with our fish,—then, some light claret.”

“I condition only for champagne, and well iced,” said Greville, oppressed by his hot and dusty walk of the morning.

“Not till the dessert, I entreat!” cried Massingberd; “unless you wish to be set down as an unsophisticated John Bull. It is so thoroughly English to come to a café and call for champagne before the soup is off the table!”—

“Will you allow me some seltzer water, then, and some hock?”—

“*Vin du Rhin*, and welcome,” replied the

gastronome. And Greville found that, to lead a quiet life with his friend, he must eat, drink, and sleep only according to *his* discretion.

The dinner, though sworn at dish by dish by Massingberd, proved its own excellence by putting him into high good humour. There were some *coquilles de volaille à la financière*, which the Crockfordite pronounced to be worthy of Francatelle; and by the time he reached his *groseilles de Bar* and *biscuits de Rheims*, with a sedative of *scubac* clear as a jacinth, he would have allowed Lord Greville to go and amuse himself at almost any theatre in Paris.

“After such a dinner, and so many months’ abstinence from viands fit to be placed before a Christian,” cried Fred, as they re-entered their cabriolet, “one feels as if existence were not quite so great a bore;—one feels as if there were still something worth living for.”

Lord Greville, who was of opinion that this world contains a variety of things worth living for, even without reference to the *épigramme d’agneau* and *méringue glacé* he was digesting, ventured to inquire of his companion in

what manner he intended to dispose of their evening.

“La belle Wilmen is no longer here, and Dejazet’s name is not in the *affiche* to-night, or I should have proposed remaining where we are,” said he, as they passed that dirty, but amusing little temple of ungodliness,—the Theatre of the Palais Royal. “To say the truth,” he continued, mysteriously, “I have a word or two to say to St. George, at the club. You shall drop me near the Rue de Grammont. I recommend *you* to try the Vaudeville.—One is always amused at the Vaudeville—or, at worst, made to forget that one is bored.”

It happened that Greville had no sensation of the kind from which he wished to be relieved. He was as happy as youth, health, fortune, and the absence of painful or remorseful reminiscences can render a man. He had a clear conscience, and a good digestion; nothing to regret—little to repent;—and, above all, he had been redeemed from the horrible satieties which beset the precocious *blasés* of the day by the habits of his early education. It would have been

difficult to point out a circumstance in his condition that admitted of being altered for the better.

Perhaps, however, had the question been asked him as Frederick Massingberd alighted from the cabriolet opposite to Chardin's fragrant door, he might have been tempted to answer that his happiness would be more complete were the family of the Marquis de Rostanges already arrived in Paris. Now that the sunshine shone no longer on the green trees and bright faces of the Boulevarts, he *did* feel somewhat isolated in that gay and stirring metropolis, where no hand was outstretched towards him. "Take the reins, and drive to the Rue St. Dominique!" said he, abruptly addressing the tiger of Massingberd's *cabriolet de remise*.

"To what number, Sir?"—demanded the man.

"No matter,—I will tell you when we arrive," he replied, not caring to acknowledge that, instead of a definite object in the expedition, he merely desired a passing view of the house specified by the Marquis de Rostanges as his habitation.

Unskilled in the localities of Paris, Greville was unaware of the vast distance between the quarter of gay theatres and fashionable coffee-houses, and that of the head-quarters of the aristocracy. At present, all he knew was from the map, where the words Faubourg Montmartre, Faubourg St. Antoine, assert as much to the eye as those of Faubourg St. Honoré or Faubourg St. Germain; nor could he surmise that the question “Is he of the Faubourg?” applied by the exclusive to young Frenchmen of his own condition of life, not only implies exclusively the one Faubourg needful,—the Faubourg St. Germain,—but, “Is he a person with whom we can associate?”—

All that now struck him concerning the Faubourg St. Germain, was its remoteness. They traversed the Place de la Concorde, gleaming with a thousand lights, and presenting its wide asphaltic terraces for the recreation of multitudes enjoying in all directions the fragrance of the adjoining gardens of the Tuileries, and the warm serenity of an enchanting summer night. Then, crossing the bridge towards the

Chamber of Deputies, entered the dull narrow streets of the less populous and less frequented quarter of the inoperative class of society.

“What number, Sir?”—again demanded the driver, as they turned into a long dingy street, presenting to a stranger’s eye a disagreeable contrast with the broad foot pavements and brilliant lights of the Boulevarts.

“Drive on, and I will stop you,” replied Greville. But he was careful not to say a word as they passed the lofty *porte cochère* surmounted by an armorial escutcheon, which bore the number indicated by the Marquis. It was a dark, heavy-looking frontage. There was nothing auspicious in its aspect ; nothing that inspired a hope of happy days to be enjoyed within. Even the joyous heart of the young Earl became less elated as, pretending to remember an engagement, he suddenly ordered the driver to return to the Hotel des Princes. He had just discovered that he was wretchedly tired with his journey, and that his best solace would be a cigar, and rest.

The Hotel de Rostanges, which, seen by the

dim light of a *rèverbère* slung across the centre of the street, produced this unfavourable impression, was, nevertheless, a residence such as the Parisians of high caste delight in ;—*entre cour et jardin*,—that is, having an ill-paved courtyard in front, rendered unsightly by the stables and their appendages ; and in the rear, a small garden, surrounded by lofty walls, obscuring the inner apartments of the *rez de chaussée*, and securing dulness and dampness for the whole house. Still, it was the Hotel de Rostanges ; the self-same house in which, a century before, the Marchionesses of Rostanges had smiled upon the gallantries of the Richelieus and Boufflers of their day ; the self-same house in which bigotry, ignorance, vanity, and pride, had united to create a race tending to engender the madness of the first revolution and the folly of the second.

The family of Rostanges was one of those which, though devoid of historical associations, maintain a high place among the fugitive archives of society. It had given no field-marshal to the armies of the Bourbons,—no

statesmen to their cabinets,—no prelates to their church ; but it had long held an honourable station in the *salons* of Paris ; had done nothing notable, but nothing to be ashamed of. Its alliances were irreproachable ; its breeding pure as its blood. During the epochs when a dissolute court was the order of the day, there was always a chevalier, or abbé, or Marquis de Rosanges, eminent for his *succès de coulisses*, or celebrated as the proprietor of some remarkable horse, or popular opera dancer. But no sooner was decorum re-established on the throne, than the family was heard of represented by some devout dowager, or exemplary marquise, a chartered saint, the providence of all the parishes of the Faubourg.

Though occupying high posts in the dissolute household of Louis XV., they had managed to make themselves fully as acceptable to his amiable successor ; and while the most prudent self-seclusion preserved them from demonstration during the period of emigration, so that they contrived to be overlooked during the reign of terror, scarcely had the waters of strife subsided,

when the ark of the Rostanges family was found, as usual, floating calmly on the surface!—They participated, though with the saving clause of pretended reluctance, in the bounties of the Emperor; and were consequently enabled to throw up their hats for the Bourbons, when the white flag floated anew over the palace of the Tuileries. During the alternation that followed, according to the French proverb, *Ils ont mangé aux deux rateliers*.

The present Marquis was at that period a *cadet de famille*, cousin to the young child in whom were concentrated the honours of his house; and right glad to accept, in the favours of the court, the reward conceded to the easy loyalty of the elders of his race. He was then only the handsome Adolphe de Rostanges, the darling of the *petit château*; flourishing his *aiguillettes* as an equerry, and connecting himself but slightly with the Hotel in the Rue St. Dominique, or the fine Château des Etangs, which were under the domination of the widowed Marchioness, mother of the representative of the family and his sister Claire.

The world—that is, the great world—hailed in the showy *élégant* of the court of Madame a charming creature, who gave laws to tailors and made love to princesses. He had a name in the coteries greater than mere title. He was “Adolphe de Rostanges,” whom not to know as he galloped on his *gris pommelé* along the Champs Elysées, argued yourself unknowing, if not unknown. To *him*, therefore, at the epoch of the Restoration, rather than to the youthful heir of the house, might the family be said to owe its notoriety. The Rostanges were invariably spoken of to foreigners as “*très bons gentilhommes*,”—the French designation of high nobility ; or “*tout ce qu’il y a de plus comme il faut*,”—the Parisian paraphrase of fashionable worthlessness and frivolity.

It was scarcely remembered, indeed, that there was a Marquis de Rostanges in the world as well as an Adolphe ; when, lo ! just at the epoch of the Revolution of 1830, just as Adolphe was getting a little too grey and wrinkled to be called Adolphe any longer, the accession of a new dynasty enabled the superannuated equerry

to take leave with decency of the irregularities of his youth ;—to repent himself of his former idle and ornamental existence,—to remember that it was to the Orleans branch of the Bourbon family he had always felt a more intimate attachment,—and to accept a diplomatic mission to some northern court, returning with a ribbon and the historical designation of Monsieur le Baron de Rostanges.

It is something, when fairly extinguished as the Adolphe or Antonin of fashionable life, to be able to subside into a Monsieur le Baron *des affaires étrangères* ! But the hero in question was destined to become even more. Further greatness was to be thrust upon him.

Spirits are not finely touch'd
Save to fine issues ;

and it was impossible that nature could have intended so imposing a figure, or so urbane a disposition, as that of the new Baron, for any other purpose than that of a *chef de famille*. The comparatively obscure young Marquis died accordingly of a deep decline ere he attained his

twentieth year ; and though a considerable portion of his large personalty was inherited by his only sister, the estate of Rostanges, being one of the few *majorats* remaining in France, the uncle who succeeded to the title had to congratulate himself on the acquisition of more than mere barren honours.

It was a singular destiny!—In his youth to enjoy the distinctions of fashion as the *élégant par excellence* of his day ; in his old age, when those distinctions had departed, the more positive advantages of rank and fortune!—Though scarcely more courted as the wealthy Marquis than as the handsome Adolphe, it was a miracle, amid the decline and fall of his contemporaries, to remain at par.

His new honours, meanwhile, brought with them new duties. The *ci-devant élégant* was not only obliged to take possession of the hotel in the Rue St. Dominique, which he found far less agreeable than his bachelor *entresol* in the Rue d'Artois, but to reside occasionally at his magnificent Château des Etangs, which he found duller still. The superannuated Adam, weary

of his desolate Eden, was not sorry to be reminded by all the mammas and aunts of his acquaintance that it was incumbent on him to secure the ancient house of Rostanges from extinction, by a timely marriage. “He was only fifty-five years of age;—still handsome, still charming. The noblest families of France would be proud of his alliance.”—

For nearly a year, the Marquis suffered himself to be assured and re-assured of this, as if waiting only sufficient encouragement to seek a wife. At length, on being closer pressed, he owned that she was both sought and found; that he was on the eve of marriage with the lovely Sophie de Nangis, the affianced of his deceased young cousin.

“Sophie de Nangis!—a beautiful girl of seventeen, of distinguished descent, and sufficient fortune!—The world was astonished, but the world could do no otherwise than approve! Yet, though *she* too had approved, no one was more astonished on the occasion than the lovely bride.

Sophie and Eugénie de Nangis, orphans from

an early age, had been educated according to the custom of their country, as *pensionnaires* in a convent; the elder sister being contracted to the young Marquis de Rostanges, with whose mother she was closely connected by ties of blood. It was a very suitable marriage. The little girl, when gossiping concerning her future honours with her sister and young companions, was invariably told of the splendours of the Château des Etangs, the delights of the Hotel de Rostanges, and the brilliant part she would have to play hereafter in the society of the Faubourg; and as she advanced in years, the day of Sophie's emancipation from the convent, her marriage day, was anxiously dwelt upon, —with all its pomp and circumstance of the *corbeille de mariage* offered by the bridegroom,—the *trousseau* provided by her guardian, the family diamonds, the cachemires, the point lace,—the everything that bewilders a young imagination tied down to the petty observances of a convent.

Sophie de Nangis smiled as she listened to these details. Though of a mild submissive dis-

position, she felt that she should be glad to enjoy a freer portion of the beauties of nature and the pleasures of life than were to be found within four high walls in the Rue des Fossés St. Victor ; and was pleased at the idea of being able to afford a happy home to her sister Eugénie, who, more petulant than herself, was at continual war with the constituted authorities in hood and wimple, by whose precepts and example her irritabilities were restrained.

But she smiled less cheerfully from the period when, on the accomplishment of her fifteenth year, the Marquise de Rostanges obtained permission for the two girls to spend new year's day at her hotel, in order to introduce to her acquaintance the future bridegroom. It was not that the mansion in the Rue St. Dominique appeared as gloomy to her as it had seemed *en passant* to Lord Greville ; on the contrary, compared with the denuded walls to which they were accustomed, the two girls regarded it as an earthly paradise. But, alas ! the companion of whom she had dreamed in her girlish reveries,—the hero of her romance,—the superior being to

whom she was to dedicate the affections of her heart,—proved to be a raw boy,—feeble, awkward, ungracious, unattractive.

Sophie de Nangis was deeply discouraged. She felt the impossibility of attaching herself to such a being. From that day, she addressed herself with renewed ardour to her devotions, as if conscious of the necessity of supplying herself with a more stable support in life. She saw that existence was not to be the thing she had imagined, and resigned herself despondingly to her lot. It was all she could do to exhibit becoming sympathy, when, a few months afterwards, the alarming illness of the young Marquis was solemnly communicated to her, and in process of time, his death.

She felt almost ashamed, in her consciousness of release, to find herself an object of universal commiseration. “ Poor Sophie !—*cette chère et bonne demoiselle !*”—the family diamonds,—the *corbeille de mariage*,—the *trousseau*,—all gone, all vanished !—In three months she was to have become Marchioness de Rostanges,—to have had her opera box, her carriages, her

horses, her *tribune* at St. Thomas d'Aquin,—her all—her everything !—In three months, she was to have become the happiest of women !

“ In three months,” added Eugénie de Nangis in a murmur,—“ in three months we should have been *free* !”—

Sophie, meanwhile, whose notions of such freedom were modified by recollections of the poor young Marquis's sallow and unintelligent countenance, trusted that she preserved the decorous show of regret indispensable on the occasion. She did, however, sympathize sincerely in the grief of the poor Marchioness and of her cousin Claire ; offering her condolences with respect, and accepting theirs with gratitude. In the course of the year, she received with amazement and consternation, from the Marchioness de Rostanges, a hint that the successor to her son's honours and estates was desirous of adding to these advantages that of her alliance ; and in due time, the new Marquis himself, accompanied by her guardian, and presented by the Marquise her kinswoman, was announced with due ceremony at the *parloir*.

“ You must not expect an accomplished youth such as my son,” had been the previous warning of the Marquise de Rostanges. “ The Marquis is a grave, middle-aged man. But in becoming his wife, my dear Sophie, you will at least occupy the station so long awaiting you under happier auspices, and thus, by God’s will, accomplish your allotted destiny.”—

Dispirited by this solemn injunction, and the associations produced by the name of her deceased *prétendu*, most agreeable was the surprise of poor Sophie on finding in the new aspirant a courteous and agreeable man of the world. It was impossible to present himself with a better grace,—it was impossible to testify greater deference than was exhibited by the experienced courtier towards the little *pensionnaire* in her blue sash and muslin frock. The respect overcame her reluctance. She had not prepared herself for respect. She had often dreamed of devoted lovers, and charming *étourdis* ;—but to be treated like a queen by a man whose manners were those of a person accustomed to queenly presence, raised her immensely in her own esti-

mation. Her consent was given on the following day.

It was a match such as Paris—that is, such as the Faubourg containing the exclusive society of Paris—invariably approves. The sole disparity was in years; and the bride, the only person justified in objecting, rather rejoiced in the change which assigned her an agreeable and distinguished friend instead of an uncompanionable boy. The convent applauded; for the same *corbeille*, *trousseau*, family diamonds, and point lace, awaited the bride; and the same lavish gift of *bonbons*, *bouquets*, and *friandises* of all young-ladylike description, themselves. Eugénie, too, was enchanted!—the Marquis de Rostanges being charmed to secure so eligible a companion as Mademoiselle de Nangis for the young wife, who might otherwise miss the associates of her own age to whom she had been so long accustomed.

The wedding, in short, was a very happy one, as well as a very brilliant; and in the winter of 1836, Madame la Marquise de Rostanges was installed in her Hotel in the Rue St. Dominique,

prepared to divide her future life between the slender domestic duties of a woman of fashion, and the substantial pleasures becoming the rank and fortune of her husband.

CHAPTER V.

On filait de tristes amours
 Constante, bégueule, et dévote,
Dans son château flanqué de tours.

PORCIEN.

Two years had since elapsed. The timid *pensionnaire* had expanded into the elegant young woman ; and the wilful Eugénie into the lovely Mademoiselle de Nangis.

Already, the brilliant circle assembled round the young Marquise began to remind her that it was time to think of an establishment in life for her sister ; that she must shortly be introduced into the gay world, where the customs of their society scarcely admitted of her appearing,

save under the protection of a husband. Their cousin Claire de Rostanges, now the brilliant Duchesse de St. Pierre, was urgent in offering to their acceptance several matches, likely at all events to augment the family consequence, if not to secure the happiness of Mademoiselle de Nangis; and more than one country neighbour of the Château des Etangs had requested the intercession of the Marquis with his sister-in-law. But Eugénie gravely declined the interposition of the one; and laughingly, that of the other.

“ I have at present seen nothing of the world,” said she. “ A new order of things is gradually introducing itself among us. A *mariage de convenance* is no longer an inevitable evil. Many of my young friends have been permitted to see and judge for themselves, previous to venturing upon the grand step of matrimony. I demand the same privilege. I am of a wayward disposition; my wilfulness would break the heart of any man whom I married without feeling for him the degree of affection necessary to the control of such a character as mine.”—

“ You describe yourself as a she-wolf, my dearest Eugénie !” her brother-in-law would mildly remonstrate. “ Yet during the two years we have lived together, I have never seen your temper so much as ruffled !”—

“ How should you ?—Have you not forestalled all my whims,—all my wishes ?”—was Eugénie’s reply. “ Is not Sophie an angel, with whom the most reckless person breathing would find it difficult to disagree;—an angel with whom ‘ *donner et pardonner*’ is the golden rule of life ?”—

“ But my friend the Comte de St. Sevron would equally forestal your whims and wishes,” resumed the Marquis. “ Or, if you persist in rejecting him, your worthy cousin, Colonel d’Aramon, is a man so easy and so frank, that—”

“ —I find him insupportable !—” retorted Eugénie. And Madame de Rostanges, who, though happy in her domestic life, felt that the completeness of her comfort was in a great measure attributable to the cheerful and affectionate companionship of her sister, did little to encourage either these, or still more brilliant projects

for her establishment in life. Eugénie was so young,—they were all so happy together,—that she thought there was no need to hurry her choice; and the Marquis, who, since their marriage, had never yet discovered an opinion of his gentle Sophie in which he could not implicitly coincide, sanctioned the decree. The suitors, therefore, were once more courteously dismissed.

Such was the state of affairs when, as they were about to repair to Paris from the Château des Etangs for the winter, in order that Mademoiselle de Nangis might be inaugurated into the pleasures of the carnival, the Fates, jealous of the long career of prosperity assigned to the Adolphe of the court of Louis XVIII.,—the Monsieur le Marquis of the court of Louis Philippe,—decreed that a severe cold, caught in a shooting expedition early in the month of September, should produce such alarming symptoms as necessitated a removal to a milder climate. The Parisian physicians, though maintaining, of course, that the atmosphere of Paris is the purest and best in the world, admitted that

the life of their patient could only be saved by hastening to Italy. To Italy accordingly they went. It was on their return from a winter at Rome, that the brown Noah's-ark containing the family party, had attracted the notice of Lord Greville; and very little did any of them conjecture the importance which circumstances were likely to assign to this fortuitous encounter.

Meanwhile, the porter's lodge of the old hotel in the Rue St. Dominique was hourly visited by anxious friends, and idle acquaintances eager to be anxious about anything, with inquiries after the travellers. They had been more than six months absent. They must have much to tell, or had, at all events, much to hear, which sometimes constitutes the greater merit. The circle in which they lived was curious to ascertain whether the invalid were restored to health, or only patched up for a season; and to know whether Mademoiselle de Nangis had returned hand-free and heart-free from Italy, to be still an object of consideration to families having sons or nephews to dispose of.

The Duchesse de St. Pierre came every day ; the Princesse de Chaulieu, and her daughter Sidonie (the convent *bonne amie* of Mademoiselle de Nangis) almost every hour ; and when the travellers really made their appearance, and it was found that the delay had been produced by a dangerous incident,—an adventure,—an adventure how strangely heightened in interest by the animated gesticulation and intonation of the narrators,—they increased in value a thousand-fold in the estimation of those who so warmly embraced them on their domestic threshold.

“ The poor Marquis must have suffered martyrdom !—I fear all the advantages derived from your sad exile from Paris this winter have been thrown away !”—cried Madame de St. Pierre. “ We have had the most charming balls, my dear Sophie ;—a *bal costumé*, of which I will tell you the particulars another time ; and at which I appeared as Lady Jane Grey, with all my diamonds, and ——”

“ Yes, you wrote us word of it,” interrupted Eugénie, whose more interesting conversation

with Sidonie the elegant egotist was interrupting.

“ And so the life of *ce cher Marquis* was preserved by the intrepidity of a charming young Russian !”—interrupted the chattering old Princess de Chaulieu, in her turn.—“ An Englishman, was he ?—ay ! a foreigner, at all events,—it comes exactly to the same thing. I dare say he was aware of his good fortune, in being the instrument of saving the days of a *chef de famille* of so much importance as our dear marquis ! He knew what he was about !—Has he applied yet for a reward ?—*Ce cher Marquis* will behave with his accustomed liberality !—Ah ! the young Russian is a man of fortune !—so much the better !—you will escape the recompence, and it adds interest to the affair. You must tell me his name, that I may be able to recount the story correctly at the Austrian Embassy, where I shall look in a moment to-night after the opera. — But those Russian names are such a perfect *casse-tête*, — ‘ *Névile*,’ ‘ *Grévile*,’ — ‘ *Dévile*,’ — *comment l'appellez vous ?* — At all events, you are sure of your man,—you are

certain that he is not an adventurer,—you are persuaded that it was not *he* who set fire to the château, either as an *écorcheur*, or to pretend to come to your assistance?—quite sure? So much the better!—Ah! you arrived at Paris in his carriage!—What a nuisance for you, my poor dear Marchioness, to be obliged to abandon your own comfortable *berline*!—Those English travelling-carriages, which look so bright and showy, are terribly incommodious!—There is no place for anything,—that is, there is *a* place for everything,—exactly where one don't want to put it!—Indeed!—The Marquis gone to renew his thanks to this invaluable friend!—Where does he lodge?—At the Hotel des Princes?—In the Rue de Richelieu?—My dear children, how could you allow a person in whom you are interested, to put up in such a quarter?—He will be pillaged—ruined!—And then, a league out of the way,—a league out of the world,—a league from the Faubourg!”—

More, much more, would the garrulous old princesse have added, but that the Marquis de Rostanges, accompanied by the individual under

discussion, at that moment entered the room. He needed no announcement. The earnest manner in which the Marchioness and her sister advanced to welcome him, sufficed to prove to their guests that the handsome stranger was no other than the hero of the Grangeneuve romance.

With the graceful cordiality peculiar to the manners of their nation, the Duchesse de St. Pierre, Sidonie and her mother, immediately entreated an introduction to the friend to whom they were all so much indebted; and to the great surprise of Greville, who had recoiled on finding the *salon* of Madame de Rostanges filled with strangers, he found himself a few minutes afterwards, seated familiarly in the midst of them, replying without embarrassment to questions made without embarrassment, though of the most embarrassing nature.

“It is strange enough,” said he, in describing the scene afterwards to Frederick Massingberd, “that I, whom *you* accuse of being reserved, and who feel myself to be the shyest dog on earth, am never *gêné* among French people!”—

“I suppose their cursed impudence serves to put you at your ease,” replied the most modest of dandies.

“No,—I know many impudent people who *never* put me at my ease,” replied Greville, drily. “I believe it to arise from their great simplicity of manners. The English are always pretending to be something beyond their reality; the French are content to appear what they are. Our country-people, with great affectation of sincerity, are the least genuine of created beings. An Englishman situated with respect to me as the Marquis de Rostanges is, would have sent me a dinner invitation at a fortnight’s notice, and got up a gorgeous entertainment. The old gentleman on finding me alone here this morning, carried me off to his home, which I found in all the confusion incident on their recent arrival; presented me *sans façon* to his friends; and would have fain have me share what he called his *soupe* and *bouilli* to-day, had I not pleaded my engagement with you and St. George at the Rocher.”

“What an escape!—you have no conception

of the *ordinaire* of an ordinary French family!" cried Massingberd, with an air of nausea.

"I am no great *gourmand*. I should have been quite satisfied to pass the day and dine with them, as they wished," replied Greville; "but I know that you and St. George would make an outcry. However, I have promised that we will both dine there to-morrow!"—

"Thanks!—I hope I know better!—St. George and I dine at the club."—

"You must write your own excuse, then!"

"Not I. I have not French enough for any such undertaking. You may tell them that I had another engagement."

"But you would not be guilty of such rudeness to any Englishman of Monsieur de Rostanges's age and rank?—Why give him such an opinion of our ill-breeding as must arise from such marked disrespect?"—cried the Earl.

"Disrespect!—Why who on earth ever heard of the Marquis de Rostanges?"—exclaimed Massingberd.

"Who on earth—out of England—ever heard of half our own nobility?"—argued Greville.

“ The Marquis seems to hold an excellent position here.”

“ My dear fellow, — remember the brown Noah’s-ark ! — Recollect the snobbish country-cousin who burnt down his house toasting cakes for their supper ! ” —

“ Recollect the equipages of some of the *eminentissimi* of Italy,” replied Greville. “ And what great family in England but has some small squire of a country cousin, among its junior branches ? ” — Then, hastily resuming, lest Massingberd might see in this remark a sarcasm levelled at himself, he added — “ We must not measure everything by the narrow scale of our English experience. I am convinced that the Rostanges family is one of high account ; and whether it be so or not, it is one from whose society I expect to derive my chief enjoyment during my stay in Paris.”

“ *Je vous en fais mon compliment !* — All I entreat is, that you will allow me to look for *my* amusements elsewhere ! ” — rejoined Fred Massingberd, with unfeigned contempt.

“ By the way,” added the Earl, “ the Prin-

cesse de Chaulieu, to whom you were mentioned by her friends the Rostanges, desired me to tell you that she was at home every Tuesday evening; and the Duchesse de St. Pierre, that she receives every Thursday. You will, of course, call on both as an acknowledgment of their civility?"—

"My fellow shall leave a card for me; but as to those cursed evening visits of the Faubourg, all I have heard from St. George determines me not to waste my time in any such *corvée*," replied Fred. "Madame de Chaulieu's, I find, is the sort of coterie where everyone belongs to somebody,—*où chacun a sa chacune*,—and where those who have *not* paired off, stand with their hands in their pockets, looking *tombé des nues*."

"You are better versed in such matters than I can pretend to be," said Greville, amused by his affectation. "Next week, when I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears, I shall be better able to take the field against you."

Meanwhile, the Earl was not ill pleased that Massingberd should evince so much reluctance to enter the society of the hotel de Rostanges.

He was not yet prepared to admit, even to himself, how completely he was captivated by the beauty and manners of both sisters, or the quiet good breeding of the Marquis ; but he saw that the pretensions and dandyism of Fred Massingberd would be thoroughly out of place among them. His affectation of libertinism would disgust Eugénie and her sister ; and his overbearing and unmeaning self-sufficiency, startled the easy old epicurean of a higher school. Greville felt, in short, that he should have been embarrassed by Massingberd's companionship. Simple in his own tastes, and unpretending in his demeanour, he was prepared to be pleased and to seek to please among the strangers who rated so highly the kind offices he had been able to render them. He did not wish to be disturbed in the attempt by the slang and arrogance of St. James's Street.

“ *Allons, donc !*—You had better relent in your own favour, and dine with us at the Union ?”—persisted Fred, on the day when Greville was proceeding to keep his engagement in the Rue St. Dominique. “ You were admitted this morning.”

“ I told you before, that I had accepted the invitation of Monsieur de Rostanges,” replied the Earl.

“ But, of course, the old creature must have known that the engagement was conditional of finding nothing better ?—What right has a man to expect punctuality in such matters, who will give you *pour tout potage* a Julienne savouring of burnt onions,—three or four greasy entrées,—and a *plat d’épinards* looking like green baize made easy !—I can see you now, making contortions over his light Bourdeaux !—Heavenly powers !—the domestic claret of a gentleman who grows his own wine !”—

Lord Greville, however, was not to be intimidated from his purpose ; and, as he expected, he found the establishment of the Marquis de Rostanges unostentatiously, but admirably, organized. If a few of the extraneous luxuries of an English household were wanting, the cheerful sociability with which the dinner was conducted more than replaced the laborious pomp of a London dinner party.

“ We are exact,” observed the Marquis,

sitting down precisely as the clock struck six, “because we hope you will accompany us to the opera. Madame de Rostanges has her box to-night.”

Lord Greville bowed his acceptance. This was an improvement on the prospect of an evening *en famille*. Yet, before dinner was over, he began to feel that even an evening *en famille* might be very tolerable with a man so superabounding in anecdote and knowledge of the world as Monsieur de Rostanges, a girl so intelligent as Eugénie de Nangis, and an auditor so attentive and willing to be pleased as the gentle Marchioness. Throughout dinner, the conversation was lively and pointed, yet never at the expense of others ; and when, at length, the Earl took his place behind the chair of Madame de Rostanges, in one of the best boxes at the Académie, he felt in the happiest flow of spirits, and prepared to enjoy a delightful evening.

Eugénie and her sister, young, lovely, conversational, were companions not likely to diminish his enjoyment of one of the masterpieces of Meyerbeer.

The brilliant aspect of the *salle*, differing so agreeably from those which Greville had recently visited in Italy, surprised and delighted him. He even preferred the elegant *demie toilette* of the female portion of the audience, to the garishness of full dress adopted at the opera in London. The simplicity of their attire, as well as their profound attention to the music, seemed to prove that they came thither to be amused, rather than to exhibit themselves for the amusement of others. It was the first time, indeed, he had found occasion to notice the genuine amusability of the French. Scarcely ever had he made one of an English party of pleasure, without being annoyed at the indifference or scorn, real or pretended, of every individual present. Nothing was good enough for them,—nothing worth attending to; and while grumbling so loudly at their folly in being decoyed into “such a failure,” how was it possible for others to know whether they were amused or not?—He had now the satisfaction of being with indulgent auditors,—gratified spectators,—genial spirits.—

“ I hope you admire my handsome cousin ?” —inquired Madame de Rostanges of Lord Greville, on seeing his glass fixed upon the box of the Duchesse de St. Pierre.

“ Strikingly beautiful !” was his reply.

“ And as charming as she is beautiful,” added Madame de Rostanges. “ Claire is the best of wives and mothers, though one of the gayest and most popular beauties of the day. You must go to her soirées.—*Her* society differs entirely from ours ;—*her* society is that of the pure Faubourg.”

“ You forget that Lord Greville understands nothing at present of our conventional phrases,” remonstrated Mademoiselle de Nangis. “ How is he to guess what you mean by the pure Faubourg ?”

“ Experience will tell him,” added her sister, turning round to make sure that the Marquis de Rostanges was no longer in the box, “ that the pure Faubourg consists of the ultra Carlists, —the families who remain unshaken in their allegiance to the elder branch of the Bourbons.”

“Among whom, then, the family of Rostanges is not included?”—said Lord Greville.

“My husband is an adherent of the reigning family,” replied the Marquise, blushing. “My own family and that of the late Marquis de Rostanges, entertain different principles; but my husband has retired from public life, and is so moderate in the expression of his political opinions, that no family breach has ensued.”

“I fancied,” said Lord Greville, “that a considerable fusion of parties had taken place in Paris?”

“The lapse of ten years has of course done something to modify the animosities created by the revolution of 1830,” replied Madame de Rostanges. “Many of the most violent partisans of the elder branch have become dispirited by the hopelessness of their cause; many have been won over by the virtues of the royal family; and many more are recalled by the exigencies of their own to the recollection that they are *Français avant tout*;—that it is their duty to support the throne,—*quand même*.”

“Many, however, still remain unwavering in

their fidelity to Henri de Bourdeaux," added Eugénie. "The most eminent of our Carlist families are resident in Austria or Italy; but we have a few among us who desert neither their country nor their cause;—some, faithful as a matter of affection;—some, as a matter of *bon ton*. No one," she continued, turning with a smile towards Greville, "can be really fashionable who is not of the *pure Faubourg*,—and being of the pure Faubourg implies pure Carlism."

Greville smiled at the gay earnestness with which she expounded her text. But his attention was at that moment arrested by the unwelcome discovery that, in a box immediately opposite, though on a higher tier, sat Lord St. George, Frederick Massingberd, and two other English dandies, whose faces were familiar to him though their names were unknown. The lorgnettes of all four were insolently fixed upon the Marchioness de Rostanges and her sister; and the colour rushed to Lord Greville's temples as he saw at a glance not only that he was unmercifully quizzed by the four dandies, but that

his fair companions were even more relentlessly handled. It is not till he finds some woman interesting to his feelings fall under the lash of such a coterie, that a man becomes duly sensitive to the profanation induced by their licentiousness. If looks could kill, the laughing, sneering Massingberd would unquestionably have fallen a victim to those launched at him by Lord Greville !—

Fortunately, the rising of the curtain put an end to their mute dialogue ; and during the ensuing entr'acte, such a succession of visitors presented themselves to pay their compliments to Madame de Rostanges, that Greville felt bound to vacate his seat in their favour and take a turn in the *foyer*. For a moment, he entered the box of the Duchesse de St. Pierre ; with the view of establishing himself as an acquaintance of the cousin of Sophie and Eugénie, but with the unlooked-for consequence of exciting the jealous envy of the unholy inquisition of English dandies.

“ Where the deuce did you pick up that lovely creature ? ” — demanded Fred Massing-

berd, when, at the close of the opera, they met at Tortonî's.—

“That lovely creature was the lady of the brown Noah’s-ark,” replied Greville, his own thoughts engrossed by Madame de Rostanges.

“I don’t mean those stupid people!—I saw you domesticated with *them*, and pitied your infatuation.—*I* allude to the lovely woman with whom Noailles was sitting when you entered her box.”—

“The Duchesse de St. Pierre;—by birth a Rostanges,” replied Greville.

“*Née* Mademoiselle de Rostanges, eh?—I never should have guessed it!—However, she has thrown off the family quizzicality, as in duty bound. I never saw a more exquisite soul. St. George was citing Madame de St. Pierre to me yesterday as one of the *lionnes* most in vogue.”

“Literary, then?”—

“WHAT?”—reiterated Massingberd, with an air of as much loathing as if he had heard the lady of his thoughts accused of theft or murder.

“I thought you called her a lioness?”—

“I called her a *lionne*, which implies a very

different species of animal. A *lionne* is a woman of fashion of the most pre-eminent kind, just as a *lion* is an ultra dandy."

"An epithet of derision, then?"

"Not more so than exquisite or exclusive among ourselves. It depends on the person to whom it is applied, and *by* whom."

"When you called the Duchesse de St. Pierre a *lionne*, for instance?" said Greville, turning towards Lord St. George.

"I intended to point her out to admiration. Every set and coterie here has its *lions* and *lionnes*," said Lord St. George, as if supplying valuable information to a new comer; "though all swear that they exist only in some other. The name had its rise among the rich fashionables of the Chaussée d'Autin; where a little knot of the prettiest women of the day, distinguished by their dress, equipage, fêtes, and flirtations, were signalized as *Les Lionnes*. Either *les lionnes* themselves, or the world in general, soon discovered that the Faubourg, too, had its *lionnes*. It became the pet name, the cant phrase of society. At the club, one talks of *Monsieur un*

tel as 'le lion de Madame une telle.' Moreover, *les lionnes* introduce all the new fashions,—have customs, manners, and a costume of their own. I wont tell you all we say about them,—for you are inexperienced enough in such matters to repeat it to one of the leaders of the class; or to confound *les lionnes* with animals more ignominiously named, and *not* to be named to ears polite.”

“I seldom err through much talking,” replied Greville, carelessly.

“*Jusqu'ici!*—But how can we guess into what excesses you may fall in your new character?” cried Massingberd. “I swear I did not know you to-night, when you were hanging over the chair of that demure little Madame de Rosanges;—you, who at Malta swore you were too shy to be presented to Lady Harriet Wilscount, —too shy to ride with her daughters,—too shy to dance,—too shy to flirt,—too shy to do anything that becomes a Christianly young lord,—especially if rich and unmarried!”

“Well!—I still plead guilty.—I dislike balls, and hate the society of strangers.”

“The deuce you do ! And how long, then, my dear Greville, have these Rostanges people been your intimate friends ?”—inquired Lord St. George.

“Precisely as long as I have known them,” replied the Earl. “Accident sometimes ripens an intimacy more than years of acquaintance. I had an opportunity of serving them,—they are grateful,—we like each other.”—

“*Et c’est une affaire faite !*—Why, a roué of half a dozen years’ London and Paris experience could not have managed matters better,” cried Lord St. George.

“After all, Grev, your mother is deuced right to keep so sharp a look out after you,” said Massingberd, commencing a second Plombirères. “You are a sly dog ! If you had been of age at one-and-twenty, like myself and other nobodies, there would not have been an acre of your estate, or a scruple of your heart extant by this time !”

“A scruple of conscience, perhaps you mean ?”—

“No—I spoke literally,—and will say penny-

weight, since I must speak by measure. One word more, however, on the subject.—Take notice, that I look upon you as a lost man, and shall henceforth make out my time at Paris in happy independence. But in the mean time, let us understand each other. How much of this new *liaison* of yours is to be known at the Hotel Bristol ?”—

“All, and everything. My mother will spend a fortnight in Paris. I expect that the greater part of her enjoyment here will be derived from the society of the Hotel de Rostanges.”

“When Lady Greville hears as much, I suspect her fortnight will be shortened to a week !”—was Fred Massingberd’s muttered reply. “If she would but carry off Julia and Cobham, I should say ‘*bon voyage* !’—Well !—I suppose they will all be here in a day or two, to bury us under a wet blanket !—*En attendant, mon cher, amusons nous bien !*”—

CHAPTER VI.

On ne s'imagine pas combien il faut d'esprit pour ne pas être ridicule.

DIDEROT.

WHOEVER chances to arrive in Paris at the commencement of the month of May, or in London at the beginning of the month of July, is pretty sure to be informed by the first friend he accosts, that he is come too late ;—that the season is over,—that everybody is gone,—that there have been charming balls for the last three months, but that there will be no more ;—that the town is getting thin, empty, dull, stale, flat, and unprofitable.

Yet those most experienced in the pleasures

of both capitals are aware that “then comes in the sweet o’ the year.” In the first place, it is the height of summer in the several climates ; and where is summer otherwise than delightful ? — In the next, it is the sober and the aged only who have been eager to depart into the country. All that is young and gay remains, upholding the banner of Pleasure so long as a single breeze remains to agitate its silken drapery.

In Paris, above all, this is unquestionable. If a foreigner desire to see the city in its fullest attraction, let him arrive there on the first of May,—on the fête-day of Louis Philippe,—when the population, pouring forth amid the lilac-bushes of the Tuileries, mingles its cheers with the blaze and uproar of fireworks, and the choral song of a gay orchestra ; and whether his political principles lead him to the brilliant saloons of the palace, where the last court held for the season congregates the fairest faces in France if not the most illustrious designations, or to the throng disporting along the gaily illuminated avenues of the Champs Elysées, he

will admit that Paris is the city of merry hearts and ingratiating smiles ; and that the month of May is never more auspiciously ushered in, than amid the silver fountains and blooming groves of the Parisian gardens.

Flowers in profusion greet him in every street ; and the airy summer-costume so readily adopted by the French on the first gleam of sunshine, serves to refresh and cheer the eye after the prolonged dreariness of winter. Hundreds of young and pretty women glancing by in open carriages, pausing perhaps at the flower-market of the Madeleine, on their way to their daily drive in the Champs Elysées, excite his interest. It is yet too early in the season for the imperfect shade and unwatered roads of the Bois de Boulogne. The gay world, more concentrated in its haunts, remains ostensible to eyes profane ; and though the crowded halls of the Carnival, royal, ministerial, and diplomatic, are at an end, there are the intimate *réunions* of the Faubourg, —the charming *matinées musicales* of amateurs, and the *déjeûners* of the English and Austrian ambassadors, not to mention those of that

golden sovereign of the ambassadors' royal and imperial master—Rothschild, the Great.

Races in the Champs de Mars,—races at Chantilly,—at Versailles,—if they do not, like those of Epsom and Ascot, transfer fortunes from pocket to pocket, serve at least to assemble the *grand monde*,—the *beau monde*,—the world which is always best worth looking at, if not best worth listening to ; and, later still, the amphitheatre of Franconi in the Champs Elysées, affords a lounge in the course of the evening drive, as a *point de réunion* for such as wish to find themselves together.

For those who neither ride nor drive, there are still the shady gardens of the Tuileries, wherein to sit and ruminate in the midst of a gay and ever-moving spectacle ; enjoying the society of a friend in a dry, warm, cloudless atmosphere, — with green boughs overhead, and cries of joy and merriment around.

Such a Paris as this is surely preferable to the more crowded city of January, whose ways are dreariness, and whose paths mud ; and though, night after night, the tumultuous ball-rooms of

the great world may afford compensation to the mere seeker after fêtes, all reasonable beings will miss in the brilliant Paris of the carnival, those sunshiny hours of universal enjoyment, when the animated metropolis seems inspired with impulses of happiness and hope.

Climate is not without its share in all this. It is not to be inferred that those favoured few of the English aristocracy who evince, on arriving in Paris, so keen a sense of enjoyment of its simplest pleasures, are actuated by the mere consciousness of being freer from observation, and emancipated from the pompous restraints of a gorgeous home. The lightness of the soil and atmosphere induce a freer circulation of the blood. The fogs of London, its east wind, its city smother, no longer oppress their lungs and consequently their spirits. The sky is blue above,—the earth dry below,—the sun bright in the heavens, and reflecting its brightness into the inner recesses of the heart.

The bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne.

Prepared to be pleased, even the most pre-

tending of English travellers ceases to be fastidious, overbearing, and disagreeable.

Fred Massingberd himself became somewhat subdued in his impertinence, after a week's sojourn among those who were neither intimidated nor captivated by his *brusqueries*. The utmost emotion he had excited was surprise ; and when he discovered that his credit as a Crockfordite went for nothing, either in shop, club, or coterie, that he was required to pay his way in ready money and ready wit, he became reduced to his true level. The bravado of a London man of small fortune, out of London, is precisely the discomfited audacity of a buffoon in a pantomime ; who attempts to astonish the audience with a wonderful leap, and has the trapdoor slammed in his face.

Not that in Paris, especially in its less exclusive clubs, he did not find specimens of *la jeune France*, having a cigar or a bet constantly in their mouths, who vied with himself in talking of steeple-chases and opera-dancers, though with less proficiency than their St. James's-Street prototypes. But these were not the rising patri-

cians of Paris. These were mere pretenders to consequence and fashion. The young associates of Lord Greville in the salons of the Faubourg St. Germain, if in truth equally dissolute, were at least well-bred and accomplished. *Their* slang was not introduced into such circles as those of Madame de Rostanges. However high their stake at whist, or their bets at the Jockey club, however wild their pursuits there or elsewhere, no sooner did they present themselves in female society than their tone became insensibly refined, their manners deferential, and their conversation animated and polished. Massingberd would gladly have disparaged them. But after calling them “spoonneys” for a day or two, he was forced to admit (oh, universal criterion of merit in the mind of a young Englishman!) that they had horses which would not disgrace Hyde Park, and rode them with courage and address.

“But please to remember,” remonstrated Fred, “most of their stables are furnished from London;—horses, grooms, everything!—Achille de Cerny and Frédéric de St. Pierre, for in-

stance, have spent their winter at Melton, and their spring in town. Achille, I remember there perfectly, and a devilish good fellow, too!—I recollect we cleaned him out!—Scarcely a rap left to take him home!—We were talking over together the merry nights we spent in Leicestershire, the other day at Bénédict's."

"St. Pierre, too, I recollect at the Travellers. After all, one can't be surprised that they have *some* gentlemanly men among them, considering the closeness of the intercourse between the two countries," — observed Lord St. George, apologetically.

Had Greville been present, he might have been tempted to say *in spite* of the intercourse between the two countries; so deeply was he disgusted by the bearing adopted towards him by Fred Massingberd and his clique, whenever they met him in company with Monsieur and Madame de Rostanges. The flippant coarseness of their irony, he trusted, might pass unnoticed by Eugénie and her sister, who were indifferently skilled in English. But he could scarcely hope that the vulgar significance of

their smiles would long escape the attention of the Marquis; who, though inert and feeble, was essentially a man of the world.

A certain degree of consciousness, of course, heightened his susceptibility. He felt that he was devoting more of his time than was altogether reasonable, to persons so little and so recently known. But then came the usual self-delusion of a man similarly infatuated—that it was not to last;—that from the moment of Lady Greville's arrival, he should be required to devote himself to his mother; and that the moment she determined upon returning to England, he should be compelled to bid adieu, a long adieu, perhaps an eternal one, to those in whose society he was beginning to take such unqualified delight.

Every day found him a visitor to the Hotel de Rostanges. The same pretext that served to excuse him to himself, afforded to others a plea for his assiduities. He was a bird of passage,—he was on the wing,—he had at most a few weeks, perhaps only a few days, to remain in Paris; he might never return, or returning,

might find the Rostanges' family expatriated, disunited, dead. What more natural than that, under such circumstances, he should profit by the Marquis's entreaties that he would make himself at home under his roof?—The daily *couvert* at his table, offered with equal warmth, was rarely indeed accepted. But every day at two o'clock, every day from the moment Madame de Rostanges' saloon was open to morning visitors, the dark, plain cabriolet of the young English lord was seen to enter the courtyard; there to remain till the calèche of the Marquise issued forth, an hour before dinner, to convey them to the Champs Elysées or the Bois.

It was seen, and seen without comment. The St. Pierres, the Chaulieus, the intimates in general of the Rostanges' family, were pleased with so agreeable an accession to their circle. The eminence of Lord Greville's social position had been readily ascertained; and it has been ever the privilege of the Faubourg to adopt into its coterie the really distinguished foreign visitants of Paris, leaving the travelling horde of unde-

sirables to scramble into more accessible and more showy society. In his own person, too, Greville was thoroughly acceptable. Instinctive good breeding and cultivation of mind are no mean enhancements to aristocratic distinction. But he possessed attractions more rare or newer to the Faubourg. His shyness once overcome, he was an admirable *raconteur* ; and Eugénie and her sister were never weary of listening to his descriptions of Oriental scenery, or piquant sketches of the adventures of his travels and voyages.—Greville had done more in Egypt than shoot ibises,—more in Greece, than indite sonnets to the maid of Athens. He had visited the finest countries in the world with a freshness of heart and eye that rendered all his perceptions doubly vivid, and imparted peculiar originality to his reminiscences. It was difficult, in short, to be more amusing than Greville, when, unshackled by the presence of strangers, he *talked out*. Incited by the lively repartees of Mademoiselle de Nangis, he would indulge in a thousand sportive hypotheses, based upon those mysterious relics of the ancient

world which had passed under his investigation.
And while he thus diverged

From grave to gay, from lively to severe,

the two sisters, after the fashion of the gentle lady captivated by the hairbreadth 'scapes and monstrous adventures of the Moor, did "seriously incline" to prefer the society of one whose conversational powers were so much more varied than the *phrases d'usage* of the best *causeurs* of their coterie.

Once established in their set, he soon became the friend of their friends. All were eager to extend their hospitalities to the popular Lord Greville.

"Invited to the Princesse de Moutfaucon's déjeuner—to the Russian Ambassadors's morning concert—to the Duchesse de Monthémont's *soirées dansantes*?"—cried Lord St. George, casting his eyes over the *billets d'invitation*, lying on Greville's table. "Upon my soul, Greville, for a shy fellow (as you say you are) you manage to get on wonderfully!—Why, these are the fixed stars of the Faubourg!—I flatter my-

self I stand pretty well in Paris. I flatter myself I am pretty well received at the embassy, and on a tolerably good footing with Orleans and Nemours. But I never so much as saw the interior of one of those Faubourg houses!"—

"You have perhaps assigned the reason," said Greville, willing to spare his self-love, "in your intimacy with the Princes."

"No, no — my dear fellow. Many men of the Faubourg have been drawn into an acquaintance with the Duke of Orleans, through the interests of the Turf. The Jockey Club, like misery, makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows.. No!—it is not politics that have caused my ostracism; for, sooth to say, I never was at the trouble of setting foot in the Tuileries."

"Perhaps equally you avoided the trouble of seeking an introduction to the Carlist circles? They are not people to thrust their civilities upon a stranger. Their habits of life are simple,—their fêtes unostentatious; and unless certain that foreigners really desire to be acquainted with them, and to accept their hospitalities in the same frank spirit they are offered, would

rather not see fussy, sneering Englishwomen, or cold supercilious Englishmen, encumbering the doorways of their *salons*."

"I am never likely to encumber their doorways!" cried Lord St. George, reddening.—"I hate all that sort of thing.—Twopenny whist, (the everlasting French game, too!) *eau sucrée* and a couple of *quinquets*,—do not enter into my conceptions of amusement!—Ten to one rather stick to my club!"—

"There!—you have exemplified my meaning at once. The old French society is afraid of inviting us, because they *know* we don't like modest *soirées*, and would rather stick to our club. You have completely justified them. They measure our desires by the splendid hospitalities of our embassy, where everything is conducted on a scale which three of their fortunes united could not compass; and which, even if they could, would be incompatible with the general simplicity of their modes of life."

"*Simplicity*!—shabbiness, you mean!" cried St. George. "The French are naturally addicted to paltry pitiful ways. They talk about the excellent arrangement of our establishments,

and the admirable order of our household service. By Jove! a Monsieur le Comte would die of fright at a single day's expenses of one of our steward's rooms, servants' halls, or hunting stables!"

"And well he might,—since it would probably include his quarter's income!"—replied Greville, seriously. "That which you call shabbiness, *I* call order. The French are prudent people; they seldom run out. It is rare, I find, for one of their great families to be in embarrassed circumstances.—I will not ask you to look at home."

"They can't run out if they would," sneered Lord St. George.—"Credit is unknown in Paris; and how can people be ruined who are required to pay ready money?"—

"You are offering an unanswerable argument in favour of short payments," cried Greville, laughing. "However, I must still maintain that the French possess more than ourselves a tendency to regulate their expenses by their means. Their fortunes are inconsiderable compared with those of England;—yet, the pru-

dence of their domestic arrangements enables them to do twice as much with their money."

"They are not eaten out of house and home, I admit, by a pack of useless servants. They don't keep a hall full of powdered footmen for mere show. They have only the men they require, each of whom costs them, from first to last, fifty pounds a year,—the mere wages of an English butler," observed St. George. "But then these brutes are kept in the rough, in a way that no English fellow would support."

"*They* at least do not appear dissatisfied.—What attached servants!—Admire the length of time they remain in families, and with what respectful affection their duty is performed! The Marquis de Rostanges has barely four thousand a year, and lives within his fortune. Yet I declare to you I never saw an English *intérieur* more unexceptionable."

"I dare say he takes care that everything shall be tolerably well got up for *you*!"—observed St. George, with a significant smile.

"On the contrary, the great charm of the

thing consists in the fact that nothing *is* got up. A French house does not admit of the superficial ostentation practised in England. Everything passes under one's eyes,—everything is canvassed.—It is not an article of good breeding, as with us, to be ignorant of all that is going on in your establishment.”

“Thank Heaven, we have better things to amuse us than such dirty details!” exclaimed St. George, warming. “Our women boast accomplishments that afford occupation for their time; our men, their political pursuits, which —”

“Do not altogether detach us from the stable, or prevent our better halves from wasting their mornings in shopping, or gossiping with their attendants,” replied Greville.

“With respect to our countrywomen, at least,” observed Lord St. George, “it behoves us to speak feelingly. An Englishwoman with her half dozen, dozen, or dozen and a half of children, passes her best days as a nurse, and consequently as the companion of nurses. Two or three olive branches at the utmost, form the stint here, where the property must be equally

divided; and your Frenchwoman, married at seventeen, turns over her two little ugly monkeys to the care of a *bonne*, and returns at twenty, unencumbered, to the pleasures of society."

"I have reason, nevertheless, to believe them tender and attentive mothers," remonstrated Greville, angrily.

"Because the meagreness of their establishments compels them to have their children always in the way!"—retorted St. George, with a smile. "At Greville Abbey, at least, Madame la Comtesse will acquire habits more suitable!"—

"Of whom, and what, are you talking?"—cried Lord Greville, in utter amazement.

"Of Eugénie, Countess of Greville,—with whom, I trust, my friend Lady Greville may be as much enchanted as yourself," replied St. George, settling his cravat at the glass.

"I have no doubt my mother *will* be enchanted with Mademoiselle de Nangis," replied Lord Greville, gravely; "because an unaffected, well-bred person rarely fails to please. But you will shortly have an opportunity of judging.

My mother writes me word," he continued, addressing Massingberd, who had just entered the room and thrown himself into a corner of the sofa,—“that, having been detained all this time at Milan, by the illness of Sir James Cobham——”

“You don’t mean to say that Lady Greville has been staying out of compliment to Cobham’s infernal gout?” — interrupted Fred, without ceremony.

“Lady Cobham was so nervous at the idea of remaining alone with the invalid, that my mother kindly consented to the delay,” replied Greville.

“For which, I trust, you feel duly grateful to Julia and her nervousness!”—cried Massingberd. “Ah Grev, my boy!—had Lady Greville been established all this time at the Hotel de Bristol, what would have become of the Hotel des Anges, in the Rue St. Dominique?”—

“We should have spent many agreeable days there together,” replied the Earl.—“My first object on my mother’s arrival, will be to make her acquainted with two of the most charming women in France.”

“ By Heavens ! I hardly know what to make of Grev ! ” — said Massingberd to Lord St. George, as they ate their quails, with Seville-orange juice, and drank their *Madère sec* together, that evening at the club. “ I’m afraid it’s all up with him ! — He is beginning to have a will of his own — and a cursed foolish one it seems to be ! ” —

“ Ay, ay ! — the governante is still a hundred leagues off ! ” replied Lord St. George. “ Let us see how far he will venture, when mamma comes with her imperturbable face and indisputable authority ! — If Lady Greville leave him here eight-and-forty hours after her arrival, I’m mistaken in my woman ! ” —

“ I’m mistaken in my man, if he submit to be bullied much longer ! ” — answered Fred, with a knowing nod.

“ He never *was* bullied, — and that constituted the real charm of the business ; — he was cajoled ! ” cried St. George. “ Fathers are sometimes asses enough to bully their sons, — mothers, never. Women have a natural tendency to humbug. They begin by flumming their lovers, — their husbands, — and end by

flumming their sons.—A fit of hysterics does the business.”

“I should like to see *my* mother in a fit of hysterics!”—cried the incorrigible Fred, swallowing a sip of curaçoa.

“*Your* governor has the reins in his hands,” replied his companion; “or, depend upon it, you would have been *caliné* in your turn. As to Greville, you will see him quietly driven out of Paris as you see people walked talking off the stage, in a comedy, unconscious that they are led from the field.”

“The Rue St. Dominique has two to one against her, remember!” cried Fred. “Between the black eyes of the charming brunette, and the dove’s eyes of that demure Madame de Rostanges ——”

“Greville must have a happy time of it!” interrupted Lord St. George. “And now, when you have done with your *rinçe-bouche*,—*au Jockey*! I have not had a touch at billiards with you these hundred years!”

CHAPTER VII.

On s'attache par ses bienfaits. C'est une bonté de la nature. Il est juste que le bonheur d'aimer soit la récompense de bien faire.

LORD GREVILLE had, indeed, a happy time of it!—Like most men educated by a woman, he had imbibed a taste for female society beyond that engendered by mere motives of gallantry. Among them was his home—his happiness. Hitherto he had found two drawbacks to his satisfaction ; natural shyness, and the apprehension of being endured in deference to his worldly distinctions. But at the Hotel de Rostanges, he was received from the first

with a frankness that rendered it impossible to be shy; and the feeling once surmounted, reserved persons become doubly attached to those who have enabled them to overcome their infirmity. As to deference conceded to his dignities, from the general ignorance of Eugénie and her sister concerning England and its society, he saw that they were utterly incapable of comprehending the position of a wealthy English peer. The Marquis de Rostanges, with his moderate estate, modest income, and total absence of privilege, evidently looked upon him as an equal, but nothing more.

He was happy, then, because welcomed as a friend and brother by those towards whom, in an hour of danger, he had acted a friend and brother's part, and whom he felt to be dear to him as his life. Mild, gentle, simple in her tastes, graceful in her demeanour, — he looked upon Madame de Rostanges as a more refined reflection of his mother — his mother as she might have been at eighteen, before the cares and turmoil of the world had withered the

smile upon her cheek, or checked the warm impulses of her heart."

From Greville, such a comparison was, indeed, a token of affection; for his mother was still his idol. He had not yet discovered the impenetrability of her soul; he did not yet suspect the absolutism of her character. Convinced that he was dearer to her than the whole universe, his affection was proportionate.

No one but himself, however, would have detected any likeness between the egotist of Greville Abbey, and the simple-hearted Madame de Rostanges. Sophie was one of those gentle creatures the even tenour of whose days had served to repress every deeper energy, and leave undeveloped every warmer emotion. The routine of her convent life,—a routine of duties fulfilled in uneventful tranquillity,—had left her nothing to desire, and nothing to regret. Throughout her girlhood, she had looked forward without anxiety and without joy, to the accomplishment of her destinies. The events which followed, were supported with the same

tranquil equanimity. She was happy as the wife of the amiable valetudinarian, so studious of her comfort, and so kind a brother to her dear Eugénie ;—contented, cheerful, grateful,—unconscious of the existence of domestic happiness more vivid or more varied than her own.

The character of Mademoiselle de Nangis, on the other hand, was cast in a deeper mould. Spirited, high-minded, a girl in petulance, a woman in strength of feeling,—the same impatience of unmeaning restraints which had rendered Eugénie a turbulent inmate of the convent, made her a somewhat unpopular member of the insipid coteries of the Faubourg. She was too candid in her caprices, as well as too decided in her opinions, for the *beau idéal* of a *demoiselle Française de bonne maison*, which implies an automaton with downcast eyes, that curtsies low when spoken to, and awaits without the demonstration of an idea or a sentiment the fortunate individual designated by those in authority over it, to endow it with “a local habitation and a name,”—a diamond necklace, taste, reason, and sensibility.

From the harshness or coldness often characteristic of a mind powerfully organized, Eugénie de Nangis was secured by the vivacity of her national character. English people of superior abilities are apt to concentrate themselves into a stern gravity which, with the uninformed, passes for dulness. The French, even the most reflective, reflect aloud. Their meditative powers are vocable. If, according to our code, "happiness is born a twin," philosophy has with them a birth equally co-partite. A superior man does not imply, in France, a man too clever for ordinary purposes, who distinguishes himself by got up speeches in parliament, or articles in some quarterly review; but one who is ever ready to enlighten his associates by the exercise of his colloquial powers,—one who does not hold his ideas too sacred to be communicated,—one who is prompt to aid in the circulation of the current coin of wisdom, without resting satisfied that in his sullen treasury lie hoarded the ingots of knowledge. It means a man who is a charming companion; a man who talks as

Montaigne writes; a man of whose fluent, easy philosophy one is never weary.

This readiness of speech is perhaps attributable to an irritability of temperament rare in our phlegmatic clime. No one could watch the mutable expression of the beautiful eyes of Eugénie de Nangis, or the rapid variations of her complexion, without discerning that she felt earnestly and thought rapidly; that her sensibility was at least as keen as her intelligence. Still less could a person versed in the mysteries of the female character survey such demonstrations, without feeling that, for her own happiness and the happiness of others, a being thus endowed should have been trained under a very different system from the superficial modes of French education;—that a mind thus organized should have been stored with information, not suffered to grow feeble and inflated by inaction,—in order that, through knowledge of others, it might attain knowledge of itself.

At present, Eugénie's best safeguard consisted in the strongly developed religious feelings

derived from her early habits of life ; and in warm affection for her sister. She would not have uttered a word, or hazarded a movement, likely to annoy her beloved Sophie ; and the Marquis de Rostanges, as the guardian of that beloved sister's happiness, was the object of her sincere regard. The gentle manners and gentlemanly views of her brother-in-law, rendered him a companion with whom it was difficult to disagree. If neither eminently witty nor wonderfully wise, he possessed that sixth sense of the French,—the tact which constitutes *l'esprit de la conversation* ;—and by not swimming beyond his depth, by not trying to talk *too* well, he contrived to converse decently on all subjects of general interest.

Eugénie seldom engaged with him in arguments developing her graver thoughts or opinions. But his society was agreeable to her ; that is, till *now* it had always been agreeable. It was not till Lord Greville's arrival, she discovered the tediousness of the thrice-told anecdotes of the courts in which the Marquis had bowed away his days, or the insi-

pidity of the little unmeaning gallantries which garnish the discourse of a highbred Parisian of the old school.

She was now beginning to look forward to Greville's daily visits as a relief. Greville had something to say beyond a recapitulation of the morning paper,—beyond the elegant triviality of Albert de La Roche Aymar, the most assiduous among the frequenters of the house, or the vagaries of their wilder friend, the young Prince de Chaulieu; and even when driven into reserve by the presence of strangers, there was an air of refinement, of distinction, in the English nobleman, imparting grace to his silence.

“I was in hopes, as you are rather later than usual, that Lady Greville might have arrived?”—observed Madame de Rostanges, as Greville entered her drawing room one morning, some ten days after their arrival in Paris.

“I bring my excuse, if not my apology,” answered he, depositing, with an embarrassed air, beside the tapestry frame at which the Marquise was working, a bouquet of gardenias, the

perfume of which already scented the apartment. “Mademoiselle de Nangis and yourself expressed last night a passion for Cape jessamines. I have been running the round of all the *bouquetières* in Paris,—from your favourite, Madame Adde, to Madame Lecarpentier, who, *par parenthèse*, is mine,—and ending with Cels and Noisette, at the extremity of the world,—the Boulevard St. Jacques,—the Rue de l’Enfer,—I know not where!—Such is the cause of my delay.”

“*Eugénie, ma chère amie!*—come and take your share of these charming gardenias!”—cried Madame de Rostanges, accepting the offering with the ease of a Frenchwoman accustomed to such homage. And she placed one of the flowers in her girdle, while Mademoiselle de Nangis rose from her drawing table beside a window opening into the garden, and advanced to receive her present with a blush at least as guilty as that of Lord Greville.

“How fresh,—how fragrant!”—said she, placing two or three in a crystal cup on the chimneypiece.

“ But you ought at least to wear one, in gratitude for the trouble taken by Lord Greville,” said Madame de Rostanges, thoughtlessly overlooking the difference of position between them ; which, according to the Parisian code, authorized on *her* part the acceptance of an act of gallantry forbidden to her sister.

“ I never wear flowers of which the odour is so powerful as to offend many,” replied Eugénie. “ The Marquis, for instance, has a particular dislike to the scent of the gardenia.”

“ But Monsieur de Rostanges will be detained all day at the Chambre des Pairs,” said Sophie ; “ and I will take care to have the flowers removed before dinner time. Mine will I dare say be faded before we return from our ride in the Bois. We look to you, Monsieur de Gréville, to be our escort during the absence of the Marquis,” she continued, again addressing the Earl. “ The Prince de Chaulieu and Monsieur de La Roche Aymar will join us ; but the Marquis has so little reliance on their discretion or

my courage, that he begged me not to ride unless you were of the party."

"He could scarcely doubt my being at your service," said Greville, taking his seat beside her, after examining, *en passant*, the progress of Mademoiselle de Nangis's drawing since the preceding day.

"On the contrary, I had a presentiment last night, when you left us after the opera, that you would find on your return home the friends you are expecting; and though I secure our ride by their non-appearance, I am almost disappointed. I want them to arrive soon," said she, little conjecturing to what extent the presence in Paris of Lady Greville might actuate the movements of her son,—“not only because I am sure you are growing impatient, but because our society will be shortly dispersed.—On Monday next will be our last fête of the season.”

“The last fête?”

“Have you not received a note from Madame de St. Pierre for your English friend?”—inquired the Marchioness.

“ Massingberd has a general invitation, I fancy, to the Duchess’s soirées.”

“ But on Monday next it is not one of her mere receptions,—it is not even a little *soirée dansante*,—it is a ball ;—and a ball in the Faubourg in the month of May, is an event ! I was really in hopes Lady Greville might arrive in time.”

“ You do not know my mother,” observed Greville, with a smile. “ She has not been in a ball room these ten years. But I have some English friends of her party who would be enchanted ; and if Madame de St. Pierre will extend her kindness to Massingberd’s sister, Lady Cobham, her fête will acquire a very pretty woman instead of a sober dowager !”

“ Ah ! the lady, then, with whom you were travelling in Italy, is the pretty *Anglaise* with fair ringlets, whom we used to admire at Rome !” cried Madame de Rostanges. “ Do you remember her, dear Eugénie ?—that fair, delicate creature !”

“ I recollect a Lady Cobham at Rome,” replied Mademoiselle de Nangis, who, too cour-

teous to find fault with a friend and countrywoman of Greville, could see nothing to admire in the unmeaning sister of Massingberd.—“ I will take care that Madame de St. Pierre sends a card to the Place Vendome, to wait her arrival.”

“ It will be one of the most brilliant balls of the year,” said Madame de Rostanges, leaning back a moment from her work, as if to refresh herself with the fragrance of her gardenia and the anticipation of a fête ;—“ *faubourg*, even to rigorism. The St. Pierre family, you know, are at the head of the Carlist set ; and, but for our family connexion, Claire would scarcely be allowed to remain on terms of intimacy with such recreants as ourselves.”

“ But surely this vehement political excitement is subsiding ?”—demanded Greville.

“ Every year, two or three of our great families are won round to the court,” replied Madame de Rostanges ; “ either through horror of some regicide attempt, or by some family alliance, or the necessity of furthering the career of their offspring. A few of the very rich and independent, such as the Chaulieus,—a few of

those having heavy obligations to the abdicated branch, such as the house of St. Pierre,—still remain true to the cause, or true to their prejudices. I have heard the Princesse de Chaulieu, for instance, assert a thousand times that were Henri Cinq raised to the throne by the aid of the parties now in power, so as to necessitate his adoption of *parvenu* ministers and liberalized opinions, she would never set foot at court. I suspect," she added with a smile, "that such an event as the return of the elder Bourbons from exile, would cause as much embarrassment to their adherents, as the return from the grave of some lamented wife or husband after ten years' interment."

"The Carlists have insensibly adopted manners and habits ill accordant with the demands of a court," observed Mademoiselle de Nangis, gravely.

"Eugénie is one of those who choose to attribute the *sans façon* habits of the Faubourg to want of contact with those thrones and dominions to which every one is obliged to bow the knee," cried Sophie. "Monsieur de Ros-

tanges, and a few others of our society accidentally connected with the court, retain their scrupulous politeness. But you must surely have noticed," she continued, turning towards Lord Greville, "the Anglicized deportment of our young men, compared with the ceremoniousness of the *bureaucratie* and the *Chaussée d'Antin*?—The *trois saluts d'usage* are abolished, except at the Tuileries and in the diplomatic circles."

"You *are* more English in the Faubourg," replied Greville, replying with a smile to her smiling interrogation. "But I am not disposed to compliment you on the change. In France, the manners of the *ancien régime* appear to me, in place and characteristic. You have adopted our manners, as you have our trial by jury, in the form, not in the spirit. Our contempt of ceremony is not a thing for your climate. Like other exotics, colour and fragrance are wanting."

"The ceremoniousness of the official circles here is simply the result of inequality of condition," interposed Eugénie. "We of the Faubourg set

stand on an equal footing, connected among ourselves, so that a perpetual display of our gentility and knowledge of the forms of good company becomes superfluous."

"Lord Greville will shortly have an opportunity of judging for himself," added the Marchioness; "Madame de St. Pierre's ball on Monday being followed on Tuesday by a breakfast at the Ambassade d'Angleterre; where, as in every foreign circle, all parties, sects, and opinions, are of necessity admitted."

An announcement that their horses were in waiting, suspended the discussion; and a few minutes afterwards, Greville, as he lifted Madame de Rostanges to her saddle, had the gratification of perceiving that the gardenia was transferred to the button-hole of her habit. Albert de La Roche Aymar was already in the act of performing a similar service for Mademoiselle de Nangis; and as the little party emerged from the Rue de Bourgogne to take its way along the *Cours la Reine* towards the Bois de Boulogne, they found the Prince de Chaulieu and his sister Sidonie awaiting them. The

little group of equestrians was compelled to break into couples, when, after entering the wood by the Porte Dauphine, they proceeded, chatting and laughing, along one of the narrow evergreen alleys of firs and pine-trees ; the avenue of Longchamps not yet affording sufficient shade.

“ A fortnight hence, and the acacias will be in full beauty!”—observed Eugénie, by way of commencing a conversation with Greville, whom accident had attached to her side in the division of the party. “ The spring in Paris resembles those of America. We burst at once into foliage and blossom. As yet, we have only the sweetness of the violets and wild cherry-trees, and the bloom of the blackthorn, to recommend the Bois. Still, it is more agreeable than when, though in fuller foliage, the depth of sand renders it in a dry summer—”

She paused,—for she found that she was talking to a disregardful ear. A moment afterwards, the horse of Madame de Rostanges, excited by the noise of the Prince de Chauvieu with whom she was riding, began to shew symp-

toms of restlessness; and Eugénie found her side already deserted. Greville, pressing forward among the bushes, laid his hand on the rein of the Marchioness.

“You forget that you were committed to *my* charge, by Monsieur de Rostanges!”—said he, by way of excuse to Chaulieu for his interference.

“It is too true!” said Sophie, addressing the Prince; “the Marquis is afraid of you,—the Marquis looks upon *you* as a dreadnought. Go to Eugénie, my dear Prince,—go to Eugénie, who has no fears on horseback, and greater skill as a horsewoman.—I feel myself safer with Lord Greville.”

Chaulieu, with a significant smile, fell back to the side of Mademoiselle de Nangis.

“See how cavalierly I am dismissed!”—said he,—hoping that the susceptibility of her sex would elicit from Eugénie some comment disadvantageous to Lord Greville, if not to the Marchioness.

“My sister is wise,” replied Mademoiselle de Nangis.—“Lord Greville has been accustomed

from his boyhood to ride with ladies. Most Englishwomen are equestrians. With us, it is a pursuit too lately adopted to be already perfected. We and our horses require a better education."

"*Mille pardons, Mademoiselle !*—You require a better *local !*" cried Achille de Cerny, who with Lord St. George had just joined the party ; "you want turf,—you want enclosures from carriages,—you want, in short, Hyde Park."

"The Bois is good enough for *me !*" cried Chaulieu, vexed at the arrival of another milor upon the scene. "I doubt, *mon cher*, whether your Hyde Park boasts such a sky as the blue one over our heads ;—to say nothing of the concert of nightingales greeting us yonder from the Judæa trees of the gardens of Auteuil."

"Nightingales in Hyde Park !"—cried St. George, with one of his ineffable smiles.

"My dear fellow, where have you lived all your life !"—added Cerny, seconding the contemptuous tone of the English dandy.

"In Paris, thank Heaven !" replied Chaulieu, coolly. "I am satisfied to import my saddles

and bridles, without bringing my manners and opinions from the other side the channel." And forthwith, in order to exemplify their excellence, he drew out his *etui à cigarre*, and by way of rendering himself agreeable to Mademoiselle de Nangis, addressed himself to the enjoyment of "the filthy weed."

Thus doubly deserted, Eugénie was forced to content herself with the society of Cerny and Lord St. George. She would just as soon have been left to the escort of the grooms.—Anxieties and emotions hitherto unknown, were beginning to impart a painful charm to her solitary reflections!—

CHAPTER VIII.

Le tact, c'est le bon goût appliqué à la conduite :—la bon ton, c'est le bon goût appliqué un maintien.

CHAMPFORT.

“ No prospect, Mr. Massingberd, of poor dear LadyGreville's return to England!”—sighed the lady of Hill Hall to her spouse, one day, after a morning drive to the Abbey. “ Dowdeswell says that her ladyship's letters don't even allude to it. She writes constantly. Not a thing is done at the Abbey,—not a tree pruned,—not a fence renewed,—except by her directions.”

“ Ay, ay !—your friend Lady Greville is like

the country's friend—the reformed parliament, too busy by half!”—interrupted old Massingberd. “Over-legislation is as bad as no legislation at all. Not so much as a cow’s tail is allowed to grow in its own way at Greville Abbey. As to that overgrown baby, the Earl, take my word for it now he has slipped his leading-strings, the young chap will give a busy time of it to his mother.—I wish you could see what my son Fred’s last letter from Paris says of their escapade from Italy, and the capital fun they contrived to have in Paris, previous to the Countess’s arrival.”

Mrs. Massingberd wished she *could* see; for Frederick’s letters were always carefully locked up from her inspection. From those of Lady Cobham, meanwhile, filled with histories of nursery ailments and squabbles between her maid and her nurses, she gathered only that Lady Greville had been most kind in assisting her to nurse Sir James at Milan, through a fit of the gout; that they were all settled together in the Place Vendome; that they found Paris hot and disagreeable; and that the nurses were

eager to be off. Of the “capital fun,” poor Julia either knew not or said not a word.

Still less did Lady Cobham conjecture the paramount influence exercised by her own pretty face, over the plans of Lady Greville ! Little did she suspect that the good-natured care with which the young Earl had escorted her through the studios of Rome, had determined the over-prudent mother to sanction his departure with Frederick Massingberd, and prolong as much as possible the detention of the Cobhams at Milan.

“ You seem strangely interested that Lady Cobham should make her appearance at this ball of the Duchesse de St. Pierre ? ”—said Lady Greville, after hearing her son exercise his eloquence to obtain the consent of Sir James.

“ Yes, — I should like her to be there,” was Lord Greville’s frank reply. “ I shall be proud to shew the Faubourg so pretty a face. Charming as they are, the Parisians have nothing to compare with Lady Cobham’s lovely hair and exquisite delicacy of complexion.”

Vexed to perceive what she conceived to be

the infatuation of her son unabated by the month's absence which she had greatly inconvenienced herself to secure, Lady Greville vented her irritation in finding so much fault with poor Julia, that her son felt in gallantry bound to become the champion of a pretty woman thus vehemently attacked. Lady Cobham interested his feelings no more than the plaster-nymph which stood supporting a lamp in the room where they were sitting; yet on hearing her unfairly accused, he began to take her part with a degree of warmth that seemed to justify the suspicions of his mother.

"I foresaw it all!"—was Lady Greville's exclamation, when at length he took his hat and impatiently left the room. "I was sure that his extreme intimacy with young Massingberd boded no good. At Hugo's age, almost every tie of friendship has its origin in some warmer impulse. He was always fond of running over to Hill Hall!—I might have known that there was no great attraction in those tiresome old people; and boy as he was when Julia Massingberd married, no doubt he was secretly attached to her.

To what mischief may he not be exposed by this unfortunate renewal of the connexion!—How little could I suppose, when motives of prudence instigated me to tear him away from London and spend the winter at Naples, that I was throwing him into the midst of perils far more terrible.—But it may not yet be too late!—Lady Cobham must be the most monstrous hypocrite that ever existed, or she could not appear so passionately attached to her children while cherishing a lawless attachment!—It must be my business to prevent an *éclaircissement*. I will lose sight of Lady Cobham as little as possible during our stay in Paris;—and once in England, *they* will settle at Cobham Park, while Hugo remains at the Abbey. As to this ball, much as I dislike entertainments of that description, I will accept the Duchess's invitation, rather than leave these two imprudent young people unrestrained by my presence!"—

And to the amazement of her son, she persevered in the intention.

"She will certainly be the belle of the ball,"

mused her ladyship, when, on the eventful evening of the fête, Lady Cobham, covered with diamonds, in a white satin dress trimmed with a profusion of artificial flowers, entered the room. "How richly and elegantly dressed!—what lustre diamonds impart to the countenance!" And she scarcely wondered at Lord Greville's desire to exhibit so favourable a specimen of English beauty in that brilliant assemblage.

The Hotel de St. Pierre, enclosed within a spacious courtyard in the Rue de Varennes, and containing on the ground-floor a suite of magnificent apartments, was admirably calculated for a fête. To a vestibule full of antique furniture of richly-carved ebony, succeeded several rooms fitted up in a fantastic style, with old china, paintings, cabinets, and sculpture; ending in a saloon of princely dimensions, the gorgeous gilding of which, intermingled with rich hangings of yellow damask, was lighted on every side by multitudes of candles in lustres of ormoulu, profusely interspersed with crystal drops.

To this stately chamber, on whose fauteuils and ottomans were crowded all the fair and fashionable of Paris, succeeded a dancing gallery of fine dimensions, opening to illuminated gardens;—the *parquet* being composed of a rich mosaic of foreign woods beautifully inlaid, while the orchestra was half hidden in a fanciful recess. In all directions, draperies of the lightest muslin, or arabesques of the most delicate tracery, ornamented the walls. Lights, innumerable lights, filled up the spaces between. It was, in short, a Parisian mansion in the richest style of modern decoration.

With the exception of the attachés of the embassy, the Grevilles and Cobhams were the only English present; and nothing could be more studiously courteous than the mode of their reception. Scarcely, however, had Lady Cobham made her appearance in the ball-room, when a murmur of mingled approval and condemnation greeted the party.

“What a pretty woman,—but how outrageously attired!” cried Albert de La Roche Aymar, attracted by a new face.

“*Charmante !—il est à parier que c’est une Anglaise !*” cried the Comte de St. Sévron, one of the *sommités* of the Faubourg.

“*Plutôt une comédienne de province !*” retorted Achille de Cerny. “But no !—she is accompanied by Lord Greville,—she is accompanied by Masanbert !—*C’est quelqu’une de la société.*”

“But what a toilette !” remonstrated one of the *lionnes* most in vogue.

“A satin gown in the month of May !” cried another.

“Diamonds at this time of the year !” added a third.

“And artificial flowers at a summer ball !” exclaimed a fourth.

“Sins of ignorance are always deserving mercy !”—pleaded the Comte de St. Sévron ; “*d’autant plus* that this *milédi* is really a woman of rare loveliness.”

“The more the pity that she should be so horribly *fagottée !*” murmured a chorus of *lionnes*.

There was not leisure, however, for circumstantial criticism. Waltzing was the order of the

night, for Strauss conducted the orchestra ; and scarcely a single *contredanse* was allowed to give breathing time between the real business of the ball.

Lady Cobham, meanwhile, stood leaning on her husband's arm, à l'Anglaise, as near the door as possible, wondering at the rapidity of the *valse* and the gay aspect of the scene ; and more particularly at finding the French ladies, of whose taste and elegance she had heard so much, so miserably underdressed.

“ Nothing but muslin dresses and natural flowers ! ”—whispered she to Lady Greville, as *les lionnes*, in their *coëffures* of roses, pinks, geraniums, Judæa blossoms, or amaryllises, were whirled past them rapidly in the dance, emitting all the fragrance of a moving flower-garden. “ Not a single jewel,—not a single ornament ! ”—

“ They look like so many school-misses at a dancing-master's ball ! ” sneered Sir James Cobham. “ How different from our Englishwomen of rank and fashion ! ”—

He was about to extend his criticisms to the male portion of the assembly, when Lord Gre-

ville, approaching them, asked permission to present to Lady Cobham the Comte Tristan de St. Sévron. Her fair face had already begun to extenuate the *bizarrerie* of her toilet; and one after another, the leading *élégants* of the Faubourg solicited from Greville or from her brother an introduction to the charming stranger.

Lady Greville's prognostications seemed on the eve of accomplishment;—Julia was really in danger of becoming *la reine du bal*!—She was solicited to dance,—to approach the refreshment table,—to take a nearer survey of the gardens,—by all that was most fashionable and most *roué* in the French capital! The brow of the dismayed Sir James grew darker and darker. At all times plain and uncouth, his personal attractions were not increased by the emaciation consequent upon his recent fit of the gout; and the pertinacious sullenness with which he mounted guard over his pretty wife excited in no small degree the amusement of the gay coterie. A black speck inserted in the brilliant line of beautiful women extending along the ball-room, was a blemish. It

was only Lady Greville who, unaccustomed to the *bienséances* of Paris, which do not allow a gentleman to sit while a single lady in the room is in want of a place, or to give his arm to his *chaste moitié*, except when entering or quitting the room, was of opinion that Sir James could not be better placed than by the side of Lady Cobham.

“What a pretty fête!” said the bewildered Julia, having summoned up her best French to attempt a conversation with her brother’s friend, Achille de Cerny, who had planted himself before her.

“Better lighted, certainly, than your London balls,”—replied Cerny, who affected Anglo-mania only where it could give offence,—namely, among his own country-people. “It must be owned, that the English are not adepts in the art of ball-giving. Their rooms are not calculated for lighting up. The colours are invariably too deep,—the furniture too variegated,—the gilding lustreless,—the cornices and chandeliers heavy, — the floors uneven and paltry. With respect to lighting, indeed, a few ill-

trimmed lamps, and as many wax candles stuck crooked by a sulky footman into frightful half-cleaned lustres, replace the forests of bougies which we are careful to place opposite to our pier-glasses, so as to reflect the light."

"And so as to make the room so oppressively hot that there is no breathing,"—abruptly interposed Sir James; whereupon, Monsieur de Cerny honoured the uncouth gentleman with a look of wonder, a low bow, and no further notice.

"An ill-lighted ball-room is the most *manqué* thing on earth!"—resumed Achille. "The first time I went to Almack's, I thought it gloomy as a dungeon; and conceived that the dirty dresses, and faded finery I saw around me, were assumed because it was not worth while to *faire des frais* for a dingy ball, where the most elegant *recherche* would have passed unnoticed. By the time I had been a fortnight in London, I discovered that Almack's was among the best lighted of your balls; and that the *toilettes* which had so much shocked me were considered perfect!"

“ *Our* ladies are not forced to trust entirely to their mantuamakers and hairdressers for attraction !” again growled Sir James Cobham ; and again the country baronet was honoured with a bow of affable amazement.

“ The arts of lighting and ventilation, in short, are in their infancy,” resumed Achille de Cerny, addressing himself pointedly to Lady Cobham. “ I doubt whether the whole London season affords a ball so light, so gay, so airy, so well imagined, as this,—unless indeed in one or two of your great houses, whose proprietors have adopted the habits of the Continent !”

“ *Est il impayable !*” exclaimed the Prince de Chaulieu, addressing Madame de Rostanges, whom he was leading towards a set that was forming. “ Is there any man in Paris, saving Cerny the Anglomane, capable of uttering such a speech as that to an *Anglaise* ? Cerny, too, who to *us* is always bepraising the fêtes of London !”—

“ Let us conclude that he has imported the *brusquerie* of the English dandies with his grooms and horses,” observed the Marchioness, gaily.

“Traïtress !” — whispered Chaulieu ; — “do you dare to breathe a word against England,—you, the last *conquête* won from us by our national foe ?”

The observation was fortunately lost upon Madame de Rostanges ; who, being one of the most exquisite dancers of the Faubourg, was more interested in ascertaining that they had secured a satisfactory *vis-à-vis* for the *contre-danse*, than in listening to the whispers of the Prince de Chaulieu.

“Ah ! we have got Claire de St. Pierre and La Roche Aymar !”—said she, eagerly taking her place ; “and near an open window too. *Quel bonheur !*”

Grevillè, meanwhile, who had never in his life been prevailed upon to dance a step, could find no better occupation than to assume beside Lady Cobham the place which Madame de St. Pierre, who had been doing the honours of her ball to the pretty foreigner, had just quitted for the dance. His mother, who was at that moment moving towards the buffet on the arm of the Marquis de Rostanges,

cast a lingering, anxious glance upon them, little suspecting that the whisper he was pouring into Julia's ear regarded only the names of the various performers in the dance they were observing.

"Who is that pretty delicate girl, with white geraniums in her hair?"—asked Lady Cobham.

"The Marchioness de Rostanges,—a cousin of the Duchess, and the person through whom we were invited here to-night," replied the Earl.

"A Marchioness?—a married woman,—and yet so light and lively!—Madame de St. Pierre, too, dances with all the spirit of a girl!"—sighed poor Lady Cobham; "and yet she assures me that she is the mother of two children!"

"And why not?"—cried Greville, laughing; "a Frenchwoman would never have occasion to dance at all, unless she danced after her marriage. In this room, there are not a dozen unmarried girls, and those chiefly the daughters of diplomatists and foreigners. All the young and gay creatures around us are *mères de famille*."

“How happy they all look!—What spirits!” said Julia, wistfully, while Sir James Cobham shrugged his shoulders with an air of compassion. He even hinted something of having ordered his carriage early, which Greville readily attributed to the eagerness with which his lady was solicited by a succession of fashionable *valseurs*, to accord them the honour of her hand.

“I never dance,” was to *them* a pretext, not an answer. It was of course inconceivable to a Frenchman, that a beautiful woman of one-and-twenty should have renounced the pleasures of the ball-room; and by the time Julia had repeated her “*Je ne danse pas*,” for the twentieth time, Achille de Cerny and the rest were beginning to cast significant glances at her companion, as a very happy man. They conceived that it was to enjoy the society of Lord Greville she made the sacrifice of sitting out.

“How exquisitely that Madame de Rostanges dances,” she resumed, with genuine admiration. “What ease—what grace—and yet how free from all attempt at display!”

“The Duchesse de St. Pierre, too, is a charming dancer,” observed Greville, unwilling to

trust himself to talk of Madame de Rostanges, and almost of Sir James Cobham's opinion, that a matron has no right to exhibit her attractions to the throng, in an exercise so gratuitous. "They are cousins,—there is a slight resemblance between them."

"I do not perceive it," replied Julia, frankly. "Madame de St. Pierre is a handsome woman certainly; but she wants the grace and repose of Madame de Rostanges. In *her* there is such an air of truth,—such an expression of goodness!"—

"Madame de St. Pierre is also very amiable," observed Greville, bending upon his companion looks that conveyed the gratitude he dared not trust himself to express.

"But she appears so restless,—so eager!"—

"You must make allowance for her *empressement*, as mistress of the house," replied Greville, wondering that he had hitherto considered Massingberd's sister so vapid and uninteresting. "In Paris, it is considered indispensable to do the honours on these occasions, particularly to strangers."

"In my opinion, it is a regular nuisance to

have the honours of a house done to one!" snarled Sir James Cobham, who seemed to be imbibing Achille de Cerny's and Lady Greville's opinion, that the Earl's whispers in the ear of Julia were somewhat close. "It is the surest way of preventing one's feeling oneself at home! A London ball room, where the lady of the house curtsies to one at the door, and takes no further thought of one afterwards, is fifty times pleasanter than all this plaguing people to dance, and hoping they are not incommoded by the air of the door,—just like the civilities with which one is persecuted in our country towns!"

"I confess I am favourably impressed with the courtesies of the French, in their own circles," observed Greville. "After conversing with *them*, the abruptness of the English strikes me as most offensive. There seems to be something wanting; either the real sympathy inducing deference of manner, or the good breeding that assumes its semblance. I trust you are of my opinion?" he continued, again addressing Lady Cobham, with an air of interest. And Julia,

who, from the day of her marriage to that night, had not received so many compliments and attentions as during the preceding hour, was too much in good humour with herself and the party, to be otherwise than acquiescent.

“ I am sure I should like Paris,” was her concluding comment. “ If I thought the air would agree with the children, I had much rather spend next winter here than at Melton.”

“ Thank you !—we have had enough of the Continent for some time to come !” interposed Sir James. “ I gave up my hunting this winter, because you fancied that little George required a warm climate. But if you catch me out of England at Christmas again in a hurry !—I’m a plain John Bull, thank God !—I don’t pretend to a taste for French polish !—I neither wish to see my wife capering among a pack of cursed mustachioed fellows, nor to caper after other men’s wives myself !—As I said before, I am a plain John Bull !”—(Fred Massingberd was not at hand to add, as he had often added before, “ a remarkably plain one !”) “ And now, Julia, as Lady Greville is coming back, be so

good as to inquire whether she is ready to go home, that I may hasten to inquire after the carriage."

The air of consternation with which his mother stood observing the manifest perturbation of the surly Sir James Cobham, was lost upon Greville, whose eyes were still riveted on the dancers.

"I am quite ready,—we cannot go too soon!" was Lady Greville's reply, seeing in her son's pre-occupation of mind, only a further evidence of his devotion to the pretty, glittering creature beside him. And away they hurried, to look for shawls in the anteroom, leaving Greville at liberty to return and enjoy unmolested the more dangerous pleasures of the evening.

"Farewell till to-morrow!"—was his adieu to Lady Cobham,—as he escorted her to the carriage. And the tone of his voice, modulated by emotions in which she had not the slightest share, did not escape the notice of his anxious parent. All she had noticed at the ball of the Duchesse de St. Pierre, was the attention paid by Hugo to the pretty sister of Frederick Mas-

singberd. Madame de Rostanges and Mademoiselle de Nangis were merely passing shadows in the picture; persons whose destinies lay so widely apart from her own, that she could conceive no common interest likely to bring them into contact. She had scarcely spoken to them; but they were probably too eagerly engaged in the pleasures of the evening to notice her neglect.

Scarcely had the English party quitted the ball, when Madame de Rostanges, on the arm of the Prince de Chaulieu, hastened to remind her husband, now relieved from the charge of Lady Greville, that his health was not sufficiently re-established to admit of his keeping late hours.

“No, no,—a little longer!”—was his considerate reply. “You have had so dull a winter, my poor Sophie, and Eugénie so little dancing, that I cannot hear of your retiring so early. Nay, since you are thus anxious on my account, I will take the carriage and be off. Madame de Chaulieu will bring you home, and Lord Greville will take care of you.”

“I was in hopes *that* charge might have been

delegated to me !” said the young Prince, with an air of pique. “Are we to be supplanted everywhere and on all occasions, my dear Marquis, by the handsome foreigner you have brought down upon us ?”—

“You know not how heavy my obligations to him, my dear friend !” gravely interposed Rostanges. And Chaulieu,—apprehensive of hearing for the hundred and fourteenth time a recapitulation of the Marquis’s hair-breadth escape at the Château de Grangeneuve, with an embellished tribute to the heroism of the young English lord and the excellence of his travelling-carriage,—found it expedient to whisk off Madame de Rostanges into the refreshment room, leaving her husband to pursue his prudent intentions of retreat.

“I am off,—I am hurrying home to bed. Sophie would not hear of my staying, nor I of her curtailing the pleasures of her sister !” cried Rostanges to Lord Greville, whom he encountered in the vestibule, returning from placing Lady Cobham in her carriage. “You will take care of them for me ?—*Mille remerciemens !*—

Chaulieu is not to be trusted !—Chaulieu has been trying to entice my poor Sophie into the gardens ; and though the night is so warm, I am convinced there must be a dew. *Rien de dangereux comme le serein !—Veillez y mon cher mitor !—A revoir.*”—

It was, perhaps, this prudent warning that instigated Lord Greville, on his return to the assembly, to beguile Madame de Rostanges into the gardens of the Hotel St. Pierre !—It was an enchanting scene. Myriads of twinkling lamps were interspersed in the overarching alleys of lime trees ; while among the gay parterres adjoining the ball-room, a still more brilliant species of illumination was effected by fountains of portable gas.

“ We could not do this in England, in the month of May,” said Greville, having induced the Marchioness to rest awhile, upon a bench at some distance from the house. “ To venture thus from a heated ball-room into the open air, would with us be fatal. Yet here, how mild,—how serene !” he continued, pointing to the clear sky over their heads. “ How

refreshing this tranquil moonlight, after the glare of light within !”

“ *Madame votre mère* informed me to-night, that she purposes only a few days’ stay in Paris,” said Madame de Rostanges, pursuing the train of her own reflexions rather than those of her companion. “ Were you prepared for so early a departure? *We* shall remain a fortnight longer. I was in hopes you would be here as long as ourselves !”

Greville was more than in hopes,—he was quite certain. Yet he could not refuse himself the pleasure of being urged to stay by the gentle voice of Madame de Rostanges.

“ The Marquis,” said she, after a pause, “ was so sanguine as to fancy you might even be induced to visit Les Etangs, on your road to England? But this I do not expect,—this I do not desire. Our friend, Monsieur de Cerny, and others of my countrymen who have sojourned at your country-seats, have made me too thoroughly understand the splendour and comfort of the *vie de chateau* in England, to admit of my proposing that you should become

our inmate. Nothing can be more simple, more *mesquin* if you will, than our country life. You would die of ennui,—you would die of disgust—”

“ I might die of happiness,—but I know no other danger likely to assail me,” said Greville, in a slightly tremulous voice. “ You do me injustice if you fancy me wedded to the luxuries of life. A man must be lost indeed to all the better aims—all the higher purposes of existence,—if mere diversion or mere luxuriousness have any real influence over his movements. I trust I have nobler ambitions,—I trust I have dearer aspirations !—”

“ By generalizing thus,” observed Sophie, with quiet self-possession, “ I see you wish to avoid the ungraciousness of a negative. You are determined on departure. You will not remain in Paris till we go to Normandy?”

“ I did not conceive the necessity of a direct reply,” answered Greville, vexed by her non-chalance. “ From the moment you expressed a desire that I should remain, my stay was decided.”

“How could I do otherwise than desire you to remain?” remonstrated Madame de Rostanges, somewhat startled by his earnestness. “What would become of our riding-parties were you to leave us?—The Marquis will trust us with no one but *you*,—and is not himself yet strong enough to be our escort. Eugénie’s lessons in English, too, would go on but indifferently after your departure. I perceive that she learns more from half an hour’s conversation with *you*, than from half a dozen lessons of her masters.”

“Then why not allow me to extend my sphere of usefulness by accompanying you to Les Etangs?” demanded Lord Greville, drawing nearer to his companion.

“Because you would be thoroughly out of place among our rough forests and rougher country neighbours,” said Madame de Rostanges, laughing. “I wish you could have seen your friend Monsieur de Massinbert’s face while I was describing to him our primitive mode of life in Normandy!”

“Wherefore judge my habits and feelings by

those of an accidental companion like Massingberd !”—cried Greville, with indignation.

“Nay, nay !—a *camarade de collègue*,—an early friend !” remonstrated Madame de Rostanges.

“Do you imagine,” persisted Greville, that because I see you assume the same style of dress as *les lionnes*, I confound you a single moment with the heartless, frivolous, I had almost said worthless, women by whom you are surrounded ? Is it because you wear a simple straw bonnet and a *robe en gaine* that you must be a coquette, like Madame de St. Pierre, or an *effrontée* like her friend the Vicomtesse ?—No, no !—Trust me I never for a moment mistook your purity of mind,—your childlike simplicity of character. Render me equal justice. Do not pronounce me an effeminate fool or a corrupt libertine, because I happen to belong to a class whose vices and follies are unluckily more ostensible than those of the multitude.”

“I will give you credit for every virtue under the sun, if you will speak a little lower and think a little more charitably,” mildly remon-

strated Madame de Rostanges. "Above all, do not give me occasion to accuse you of that besetting sin of your countrymen,—*d'être mauvaise langue*. Madame de St. Pierre is my relation,—her friends are my friends. We are at present under her roof,—that is, we ought to be, and are about to be,"—she continued, looking towards the sky and rising from her seat, as if preparing to return to the house. "Do not, because you happen to have been enjoying the society of one of your countrywomen, whose manners are more reserved and whose habits more sober than ours, attribute to mine—(no, not even to *les lionnes*, against whom you seem to entertain a *guignon*!)—motives less pure than those of the decorous Lady Cobham."

Lord Greville started. There was a tone of pique in the insinuation of Madame de Rostanges strangely at variance with her previous *insouciance*. He was about to burst into protestations of indifference and contempt towards Massingberd's sister; when a moment's consideration,—the fruit perhaps of a month's experience of the corruptions of Parisian life,—determined him to forbear.

“If I am illiberal in my opinion of your cousin the Duchess,” said he, in a measured voice, “believe me *you* judge unfairly of Lady Cobham. She is a person as irreproachable as she is lovely. As a wife and mother, wife to a surly husband and mother to two peevish, sickly children, Lady Cobham is excellent beyond all praise.”

Greville flattered himself at that moment that he had achieved a *coup de maitre*, and that the sudden eagerness of Madame de Rostanges to return towards the house, might be actuated by a feeling of jealousy.

“Eugénie is right !” said she, taking his arm at the close of his apostrophe ; “we are capable of drawing our deductions of character only according to the prejudices of early education. Eugénie was saying yesterday that you, for instance, would never acquire a real taste for our society ; that the ancient national antagonism between French and English exists as strong as ever in your heart.”

“And this cruel reproach,” cried Greville, “because I ventured to take up the defence of—”

“Quick—quick!—they are beginning a mazurka, and I have been everywhere in search of you!” cried Albert de La Roche Aymar, offering his arm to the Marchioness, as she attained the parterres adjoining the Hotel.—“Mademoiselle de Nangis began to fear you had returned home with Monsieur de Rostanges.”

“I left my sister with Sidonie and the Princesse,” said Madame de Rostanges, re-entering the ball-room, eager to enjoy her mazurka with one of the most popular partners of the Faubourg. “I have been quietly seated in the garden, arguing over with Lord Greville the respective merits of our national manners.”

“*Toujours ce mitor!*”—cried the Prince de Chaulieu, who, standing in the doorway as she passed, overheard the explanation.—“*Celui là nous vengera de son indifférence; mais c’est une vengeance dont je me dispenserais bien!*”

Lord Greville, meanwhile, taking up his usual post of observation beside one of the columns of the dancing gallery, with his eyes fixed upon the picturesque movements of the mazurka, ad-

mirably performed by the leading beauties of the Faubourg, began almost to regret that dancing had formed no part of his Eton and Oxford education.

CHAPTER IX.

Quand on veut plaire dans le monde, il faut se laisser apprendre beaucoup de choses qu'on sait, par des personnes qui les ignorent.

VOLTAIRE.

“ THEN what *have* you been seeing and doing, my dear Hugo, during the last three weeks?”—inquired Lady Greville of her son, when he joined her breakfast-table, at the Hotel Bristol, the following morning. “ You say you have visited none of the public monuments or institutions?”—

“ I am not fond of sight-seeing,—particularly alone,”—said Greville, evasively.

“ But the Chambers—surely you must have

been anxious to obtain some idea of the public men,—the leading orators of the day ?”—

“ I am ashamed to say how little !” answered Greville, with a sigh. “ On such occasions, I am invariably disappointed ; and for the future, intend to remain the dupe of my imagination.”

“ How bored you must have found yourself, since you take no interest in all that usually occupies a stranger in Paris !”—observed Lady Greville, with her inquiring eyes fixed on his countenance.

“ Never, mother, never, I assure you !”—cried the Earl, with earnestness. “ Like Valérie in the play—‘ *J’attendais !*’ I knew,” he resumed, fearing he might have said too much, “ that when you and Lady Cobham arrived, I should have full occupation for my leisure.”

“ Sir James has no thought of prolonging his stay here,” said her ladyship, sternly. “ He has business in town, and talks of being off to-morrow.”

“ The deuce he does !” cried Greville, apprehensive that this abrupt departure might influence the movements of his mother. “ That

will be a great disappointment to poor Fred Massingberd, who is dying to remain here till after the Chantilly races."

"It would be no great stretch of kindness on your part to remain another week, and give him a place in your carriage to London, as you did to Paris,"—said Lady Greville, busying herself with the egg she was preparing, lest her son should read in her looks the anxiety with which she listened for his reply. "I am strongly inclined to accompany the Cobhams, if you determine to accommodate your friend."

"By Jove,—an excellent idea!"—cried the Earl, overjoyed at the proposal. "After all, as you say, my dear mother, it will disgrace me in England if I return without having visited the Louvre,—the gallery at Versailles,—the Archives,—the,—the everything that a *laquais de place* drags one about to look at!—After all, Fred Massingberd's attachment to the Jockey-Club may prove the means of redeeming my character!"—

"In that case," continued Lady Greville, greatly surprised, and still watching him with

the expectation of some evasion,—“in that case, we had better renounce the *déjeuner* at the Embassy this morning. We shall probably start to-morrow; and I have a thousand plans and projects to talk over with you, preparatory to my arrival in England.”

“I fear I cannot give up the breakfast,” said Greville. “We have two or three hours before us, for conversation. It is amazing how much may be said by determined talkers, my dear mother, in the course of two or three hours.”

“It is something new for *you* to be so fond of *fêtes*!”—observed his mother, peevishly.

“New, perhaps,—but at *my* age surely not very unnatural!” replied he, gaily. “Last night, I could have almost regretted the want of skill which prevented my joining in the dance;—except, indeed,” he continued, apprehensive of having given too tangible a clue to his sentiments; “except, indeed, that as our charming friend Lady Cobham had no better cavalier, my services were in request. You have no notion, by the way, how much sensation her beauty created. Were she to remain here, and obtain

some little insight into the mysteries of a French toilet, she would become irresistible."

"I saw no one better dressed, last night!" said Lady Greville, forgetting for a moment her personal antipathies, in the stronger animosity of national jealousy.

"No one more richly dressed, perhaps. But she was the only woman in the room who appeared in a winter costume amid the lightness of the summer season. Here, satins and jewels are abolished after Easter. The French hold that there is reason as well as rhyme in the old song,—describing

Une robe légère
D'une extrême blancheur,
Un chapeau de bergère,
De nos bois une fleur,

as the attributes of summer."

"I no longer wonder, my dear Hugo, that you have not found a moment to visit the Chambers or the Bibliothèque!"—cried Lady Greville, with rising indignation. "Your friend Mr. Massingberd has evidently been introducing you through a course of milliners' shops!"

“ My friend Fred,—who is very little in the habit of being called ‘ Mister,’ ”—replied Greville, laughing at her unwonted impetuosity, “ is too much occupied with his *jeu de paume*, and *tir aux pigeons*,—his *stalle d’opéra* and nightly whist,—to take much trouble about the completion of my education. But to return to business, (for I am not ashamed to own that just now my business is pleasure,) let me strongly advise you, dear mother, not to absent yourself from this breakfast. It is the only opportunity you will have of seeing the notabilities of Paris; and——”

“ I have as little curiosity on the subject as *you* concerning its galleries and institutions,” was her cold reply. “ Make what arrangements you choose with Lady Cobham and the person not in the habit of being called ‘ Mister !’ I, at least, shall form no obstacle to your entertainment.”

Grieved to perceive that he had annoyed her, though scarcely understanding the nature of his offence, the Earl was about to follow his former custom of purchasing by whatever concession

she might demand, her restoration to a happier mood, when in walked Sir James Cobham, still more out of temper than Lady Greville. His wife had not been ready to breakfast with him,—his wife had never ceased talking of the brilliancy of a Parisian ball,—his wife was anxious to go to the *déjeuner dansant*,—his wife had even ventured to propose the prolongation of their stay in Paris!—He was become a secondary object to her!—The children,—the poor children,—nay, even the head-nurse was overlooked in all this excitement of folly and vanity!—To propose to him to remain in Paris,—to *him*!—in Paris! What was there for a man,—a reasonable man, like himself,—to do in Paris?—How was he to pass his time, while *she* was lounging at Madame Camille's, or flirting with Monsieur le Comte Achille de Cerny?—

No wonder that a man thus injured, should enter Lady Greville's breakfast-room with the scowl of an ogre; and avenge himself by assuming an Englishman's privilege of contradicting every observation addressed to him by the-

Earl, even regarding that open question—the weather !

Lord Greville prognosticated that it would be fine for the breakfast ; Sir James was certain it would rain. Lord Greville ventured to persist that it would be fine ; Sir James became furiously resolved it should be rain. Lord Greville pointed to the clear blue sky ; Sir James swore that it would rain cats and dogs. Lord Greville referred to the barometer ; Sir James condescended to quote from Murphy. It was clear that the cross husband was primed for dissension ; and his hostess who, five minutes before, had been preparing to quarrel with her son, became now so much alarmed in the supposition that Sir James Cobham's irritability arose from well-founded jealousy of the Earl, that all her care was to conciliate him and get Greville in safety out of the room.

Nothing was easier for her than to give him a commission for a distant part of the town ; nothing easier than for the Earl to undertake its execution. No sooner, however, did he escape from the Hotel Bristol, than he assigned

his commission to his *laquais de place*, in order that he might hasten to Madame Adde's, to superintend the composition of two bouquets, to be despatched, for the morning's fête, to the Hotel de Rostanges.

The door of the sweetest of Parisians was already besieged by cabriolets, intent upon a similar errand. Madame Adde (familiarily named by Chaulieu and La Roche Aymar, *la mère des lions*,) was standing perplexed between princes and peers,—roses and jessamine,—defending with loyalty the gardenias bespoken by Lord Greville, and the solitary magnolia belonging *par abonnement* to Frédéric de St. Pierre ;—while on the counter, lay garlands for bonnets, *agraffes* for the hair, and bouquets for the hand,—made up with unequalled taste and skill, and about to be sent home to the fairest of *les lionnes*, both of the Faubourg and Chaussée d'Antin. The single flower, the *Succès*,—the *Triomphe*—destined for the button-hole of each correspondent *lion*, was also carefully shaped and prepared ;—the *bouquetière* remaining, of course, in proper ignorance of the signals of the tele-

graph she managed, while selecting and distributing

All those token flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well.

Greville, with his habitual reserve, waited till the last cabriolet drove from the door, bearing off enveloped in snow-white paper its fragrant prize, before he attempted to give his orders.

“I have had some difficulty, Milor, as you may perceive, in keeping these gardenias for you,” said Madame Adde. “On such a day as this, every one is wild for the choicest flowers ; and had not yours been bespoken, I might have realized forty francs by them.—*Voyons !*—two *bouquets à la main*, you say ? Are the gardenias to be equally distributed between them, — and with what *coëffure* are they to match?”—

“The gardenias are all to be placed in one nosegay,” said Lord Greville, ashamed to find himself involved in puerilities which, to a young Frenchman, especially if a *lion*, afford serious occupation.

“The two bouquets, then, are *not* to be of equal richness?”—demanded Madame Adde,

who was now seated in busy activity, sorting her flowers.

“ Yes—with that exception, they must be alike.”—

“ But what am I to substitute for the gardenias?—The nosegay, you perceive, will be composed of roses,—(pompon and thé,)—heliotrope, cactus, fuchsia, —”

“ You can let orange-flower correspond with the gardenias,” said Greville, not desirous to enter too minutely into these floral emblems.

“ It is for a *demoiselle*, then ?”—demanded Madame Adde, with a significant smile,—“ a *demoiselle Française*, I trust ?— You are of course aware, Milor, that with *us* a gift of orange-flowers to an unmarried lady amounts to a proposal of marriage ?”—

“ Give me myrtle, then, or azorian jessamine, or what you will !” cried Greville, growing impatient,—“ only make haste ; for I have to convey the bouquets some distance before I return home to dress for the breakfast.”

“ May I not be permitted to send them, then ?” inquired Madame Adde, accustomed to find

herself trusted on such occasions, and tolerably *au fait* to all the love affairs of either Faubourg.

“ No,—I wish to offer them in person,” said Greville; and in order to avoid further questioning, he agreed to return in two minutes; prepared to loiter away the interval in a contemplation of the beauties of the church of the Madeleine, opposite to the portico of which stands the diminutive but scarcely less renowned temple of the *bouquetière en vogue*.

To his surprise and vexation, he found the carriage of the Cobhams stopping at the gate opening from the Rue Tronchet to the Madeleine!—He could do no less than offer his arm to Julia, who was being dragged by her husband through a round of sight-seeing, (at Lady Greville’s instigation,) by way of making her too tired for the breakfast. Then, as if ashamed of his ungallant reluctance, he offered her a beautiful Cristata rose which, almost unconsciously, he had carried away from the counter of Madame Adde.

“ Was it Lady Greville who apprized you of my intended visit here ?”—demanded Sir James,

who could scarcely suppose the arrival of Lord Greville at the church door the result of accident.

“No !—I little expected to meet such agreeable society !” he replied, with what Cobham regarded unparalled audacity. “I have an appointment in the neighbourhood, and am simply idling away the interim.”

“We have every reason to feel flattered,” sneered Sir James; while poor Julia grew more and more nervous, on finding him so sadly out of sorts.

It could not but occur as a matter of surprise to the *gardien*, standing beside them in his blue uniform and solemn silence, that three well-dressed English persons should come of their own free will to visit the interior of the fine temple of the Madeleine, yet not one of them make a single comment on its beauties, or even deign to pause for the survey !—They stood together, talking in the midst of the church, as though it were the king’s highway ;—Lord Greville persuading Lady Cobham to go to the *déjeuner*, and Sir James looking four-and-twenty pounders at the offender.

Little did Madame Adde conjecture when receiving, at the close of her task, the civil thanks and still more acceptable gold of the handsome young Englishman, what perils he had encountered while she was leisurely completing his order.

Meanwhile, the weather, albeit a fête was in progress, fulfilled the auguries of the Earl in preference to those of the grumbling country baronet. The morning was resplendent,—the afternoon beautiful ;—a slightly-clouded sky, unaccompanied by a breath of wind, promised all that the most fastidious could desire. It was what the French appropriately call *un temps de demoiselle*.

Already, carriages were crowding towards the Faubourg St. Honoré, where stands the residence of the British Ambassador ; of which the hospitalities during the last quarter of a century have exceeded fourfold those of any other household in Paris, during four times the same number of years. The present fête was given to commemorate a royal birthday ; and the conservatory surrounding the garden front of the

Hotel, as well as an adjoining temporary room, were ornamented on every side, from floor to ceiling, with the most exquisite flowers. In the grand hall of entrance, the English guests were gratified by the sound of their national anthem, executed by an excellent military band ; while, from the dancing-gallery within, resounded the inspiring orchestra of Tolbecque.

“ What delightful weather,—what a charming fête !”—resounded from groups of gaily dressed beauties of all nations, sauntering on the lawn shaded by lofty trees, which slopes from the house towards the Champs Elysées.

“ The season could not be more auspiciously concluded than by one of the exquisite entertainments of *l’Ambassadrice d’Angleterre* !” was no unfrequent exclamation among the French ; ever prompt to render justice to the princely manner in which the honours of our country are offered to them by its representatives at the court of France.

“ Who on earth are all these strange-looking people ?”—demanded Fred Massingberd of Cerny and La Roche Aymar, with whom, among the

latest arrivals, he lounged into the ball-room, trembling lest he should be suspected by the French dandies of any acquaintance with the Ebsworths, Macmichaels, and other obscure English guests assembled by an official fête.

“I should rather inquire of you, since they are your countrypeople!” said La Roche Aymar. “We, however, are wise enough not to expect exclusivism on these occasions. It is not at these general acknowledgments of Foreign office letters, we form our selection of English acquaintances. I think I met you here on Monday night?”—he continued, significantly addressing Massingberd, who, not being included among the personal friends of the Ambassadors, and consequently not invited to her private parties, found it convenient just then to swear at the infernal noise of the *cornet à piston*, instead of replying to the question.

“Where is Greville this morning?”—resumed La Roche Aymar, good-naturedly dropping the subject for one more acceptable.

“Greville?—oh! Grev is re-installed under petticoat government,” cried the dandy. “Grev,

you know, is hag-ridden by a despot of a mother, who, for the next three years don't allow him to call his soul or his estate his own."

"He seems, nevertheless, to do and to spend pretty much what he pleases," observed La Roche Aymar, with whom, as with most foreigners, parental authority was sacred.

"Lady Greville is only just arrived in Paris," said Massingberd, in explanation.

"*Une femme présentable ?*" — demanded La Roche Aymar.

"You saw her last night at Madame de St Pierre's."

"Dragonizing that pretty Madame de Cobham, who seemed sinking under the weight of her dulness and her diamonds?"—

"Precisely."

"*Une femme charmante,—d'un ton parfaite-ment comme il faut !*"—replied La Roche Aymar, to the great surprise of the St. James's Street dandy, unaccustomed to consider a woman a human being, after forty ; or to imagine that the word *charmante* could be applied to appropriateness of dress and deportment, as well as to the attractions of youth and beauty.

“ But we shall see Lord Greville here, I presume ?”—continued Albert de la Roche Aymar. “ On such an occasion as this, he would not absent himself;—more particularly as they treat him in this house almost as one of the family.”

“ I should rather inquire of *you*,” said Fred, bored by the cross-examination of his companion, yet fully alive to the advantage of being seen on the arm of one of the superlatives of the day. “ Greville has cut his English friends;—except now and then at the club, I never behold him.”

“ *C'est vrai !*” replied Albert. “ *Depuis quelque temps, il reste toujours blotti dans son petit coin du Faubourg—et il fait bien.*”—

“ He will be a monstrous catch for Mademoiselle de Nangis !” cried Fred, staring out of countenance the fair faces around them.

“ A monstrous what ?”—demanded Albert de La Roche Aymar, in some surprise.

“ A splendid *parti* for that black-eyed sister of Madame de Rostanges.”

“ Do you imagine,” inquired Albert, gravely, —not certain whether the remark were intended

as a mystification,—“do you *really* imagine that Greville is attracted to the Rue St. Dominique by the black eyes of Eugénie de Nangis?”—

“I imagine that he is invited there out of deference to his forty thousand a year. *Un million de rentes, mon cher, ne nuit à rien.* Greville is completely at home among them. You talk of his being received in this house as *l'enfant de la maison*; he is fifty times more cordially welcomed by old Rostanges and his wife!”

Albert could scarcely repress a smile. He resolved to inflict upon Fred Massingberd, as a punishment for his stupidity, the narrative of the burning of the Château de Grangeneuve, so often recounted to him by the Marquis. But Fred stopped him in the outset.

“My dear fellow,—I know all that!—I was there!—I was the first person who discovered the fire. But they never invite *me* to dinner—they don’t ask *me* to accompany them into Normandy!”—

“Did you venture up a rickety ladder, pray, to snatch the poor asthmatic Marquis out of the

flames?" inquired Albert, smiling at his irritation.

"Not I!—I hope I am not such an ass!—But rely upon it, that if I had, it would have been long enough before they attempted to entangle *me* in an engagement with Mademoiselle de Nangis."

"I suspect, however, that your fortunes are far better assorted with hers, than those of your friend," observed Albert, unable to suppose a marriage formed on any other basis than parity of means. "Mademoiselle de Nangis has not more than five-and-twenty thousand francs income, which is, I think, somewhat about what you told me your father allowed you,—a thousand pounds sterling a year."

Again Fred Massingberd, unable to confirm, saw fit to turn a deaf ear to the interrogation. He was surprised, however, to find the black-eyed damsel in question so well endowed. Unaccustomed to the equal distribution of fortunes in French families, he had expected that five or ten thousand pounds formed the utmost of her dowry. For a moment, he began to ask

himself whether she might not be worthy his own consideration.

“Lady Greville would move heaven and earth rather than consent to her son’s marriage with a foreigner,” said he, by way of dispatching an intimation through La Roche Aymar to the Rostanges family; “and she has at present unqualified power over his fortunes. She might make him a ward in Chancery,—she might curtail his allowance,—she might ——”

“She might satisfy herself, had she honoured the ambadress with her company,” interrupted Albert,—drawing Massingberd into the gardens, and pointing out the object of their discussion seated under the overhanging branches of a beautiful hawthorn, by the side of Madame de Rostanges,—“that her son is at present in no *very* great peril of holy matrimony.”

Blushing for the morality of his previous inferences, Fred Massingberd affected to laugh off the affair as a jest. He was really ashamed of his credulity; but in spite of his own deeply ingrained *rouerie*, there was something in the almost feminine purity of Greville’s character,

which had hitherto prevented his attributing to the attractions of the married sister, the *dévouement* of his friend.

“ When are we likely to hear news of breakfast ?”—said Albert, addressing the Comte de St. Sévron, who was also intently watching the tête-à-tête between Greville and Madame de Rostanges.

“ Not yet, I trust !—The day is so charming, that I am in no hurry to quit this exquisite *pelouse* for a stuffy *salle à manger*,—even at the invitation of a *suprême de volaille* !”—replied the Count,—one of the most polished epicureans of the Carlist set.

“ But one can enjoy nothing in the midst of this *cohue* !”—drawled Massingberd, glancing contemptuously towards a group of singularly beautiful but singularly ill-dressed English girls, of whom he dreaded being supposed an acquaintance.

“ Pardon me,—the *cohue* itself charms me !” interposed the cool St. Sévron, who held in abhorrence the slang and affectation of the would-be fine young English gentleman. “ I adore

new faces, particularly when so lovely as those we look on."

"But what a different set of people one saw last night at Madame de St. Pierre's!"—persisted Fred, with a contemptuous smile.

"Different indeed! But as Madame de St. Pierre's *salle de bal* contained only those whom I have met in every *salle de bal* since January, it is a relief to see something new."

"I should have thought that there were persons here, however, my dear Count," said La Roche Aymar, joining in the conversation, and looking towards the pretty but vulgar wife of one of the cabinet ministers, "with whom you were not particularly pleased to find yourself in contact."

"*Mon cher Albert!*—for what do you take me?"—replied the philosophical St. Sévron. "I may oppose a man in the Chamber, or object to receive him at my table, whom I am as well content to meet at an assembly, especially a diplomatic one, (which is scarcely accountable for its constituents,) as if walking on the Boulevards or in the *foyer* of the opera."

“ Still I confess I have no taste for running my head against persons whose names are so unsatisfactorily known to me in their public capacity,” resumed La Roche Aymar.

“ Or against the ill-bred noisy clique of the Chaussée d’Antin,” added Fred Massingberd, directing his sneers against a group of very pretty women in a somewhat peculiar costume. “ *Voilà, je crois, la compagnie des lionnes.*”

“ Fie on such sweeping clauses !”—interrupted St. Sévron. “ Nothing so unfair as to attempt to damn by an epithet, or so absurd as to classify men or women, as you would vegetables or fossils. Of those to whom Monsieur de Masanbert is alluding, no two are the least alike in character or pursuits. *L’esprit de coterie* engendered by our weekly receptions, naturally produces intimacy and similarity of dress and manners, among persons frequently re-united. But it is cruel to opprobriate them with a collective name, which is sure to render the class thus distinguished unpopular and ridiculous.”

“ I am beginning to suspect *you* of lionism, *mon cher St. Sévron !*”—cried Albert de La Roche

Aymar, apprehensive that the English dandy might fancy himself preached at. “With whom are you *accouplé*, pray?—Is your *lionne* a smoker of cigars or papelitos?—Does she sup *au cabaret* with you, or only dine?—Do you pass your evenings with her at the concert of the Chalet, or stick to the publicity of Franconi’s?”—

“Depend upon it, he sticks at nothing!” cried Massingberd, delighted at this mystification of the man he wanted courage to attack.

“You do me too much honour,” observed St. Sévron, in his former dry tone. “The only woman in Paris for whose bright eyes I feel disposed to play the fool, has never been promoted even by the most mischievous of the silly old women by whom such scandals are easily concocted, to the distinction of being a *lionne*. The sole fault of which I ever heard her accused, and that but recently, (*Monsieur de Masanbert daignera me pardonner !—*) is that of a too partial Anglomania.”

“Madame de Rostanges for a thousand,—” cried Fred and La Roche Aymar at the same moment. But all further observation was

checked on perceiving that their exclamation had caught the ear of Mademoiselle de Nangis; who, leaning on the arm of her brother-in-law, with her dark eyes full of mournful earnestness, stood in silent contemplation of the scene.

At that moment, the well-known national air, which forms for many the *chef d'œuvre* of the *ars musica*,—

Oh! the roast beef of old England!

resounded on the lawn. Every one began instantly to hurry through the conservatories towards the gallery; where, amid embowering orange-trees, was served a magnificent banquet.

“Let us wait for Sophie!” said Mademoiselle de Nangis, detaining the Marquis, while Albert the Parisian Lucullus, and Fred the Epicurus of St. James’s Street, pressed past them, with more eagerness than gallantry, to the feast.

“No, no!—Lord Greville will take the best care of her; she is safe and happy with Greville!” replied Monsieur de Rostanges, urging her on,—“*Depêchons nous*, or I cannot answer, my dear Eugénie, for finding you a place.”

Monsieur de St. Sévron, however, remained stationary, till the pink hawthorn tree yielded up the occupants of the bench almost hidden under its drooping branches; and when, by the interest of Lord Greville, a small table was apportioned to Madame de Rostanges in a nook surrounded by orange trees, the Count gliding silently in, possessed himself of a vacant place by her side.

“*Où il y a manger pour deux, il y a manger pour trois !*”—said he, quietly unfolding his napkin. “I congratulate myself, *chère Marquise*, on the chance which has procured me a position so envied.—*Dieu ! que nous sommes bien ici !*—Monsieur de Gréville ! they are inquiring whether you take soup.”—

CHAPTER X.

La société est composée de deux classes ; ceux qui ont plus de dîners que d'appétit, et ceux qui ont plus d'appétit que de dîners. Il s'agit de la première.

L'ABBÉ GALIANI.

It is scarcely to be supposed that a man of the world, a man of the Parisian world, such as the Comte Tristan de St. Sévron, would have made so open a demonstration in favour of the Marquise de Rostanges, had his sentiments been of the nature inferred by Massingberd and his companion.

The motives prompting him to intrude so officiously upon the tête-à-tête arranged by Lord Greville were of a better nature ; a nature in-

spiring him with honest satisfaction when he found that his presence, instead of being resented by the Marchioness, was hailed as an acquisition.

St. Sévron, though an epicurean in his philosophy, was a man of the nicest honour and most amiable disposition. Clever, caustic, but restraining his sallies by the tact of sound good sense, it had long been his ambition to obtain the hand of the charming sister-in-law of his friend and country neighbour the Marquis de Rostanges. But Eugénie gave no encouragement to his suit,—no indication of relenting in his favour. Rostanges could make nothing of the affair. He, who at sixty years of age was happy in the affections of a wife of twenty, could scarcely credit the assertion of St. Sévron that Mademoiselle de Nangis, at seventeen, considered a man of forty too old for her. But he was forced to admit that he foresaw no chance of a change in her decision against his friend.

But although thus baffled in his purpose, St. Sévron was not to be shaken in his attachment. He loved the beautiful and gifted

Eugénie with all the fervour of a boy, all the steadiness of a man;—nay, he even loved her sister for her sake. There was as much in the impetuosity of character of Mademoiselle de Nangis to excite anxiety on her account, as in her charms and talents to command admiration. He feared that her destiny might become a stormy one. He foresaw that she was not fated to be happy; and though *his* happiness was a matter of avowed indifference to her, he felt that, whatever the fortunes of Eugénie,—even if affianced to another,—even if the wife of another,—she must still remain an object of paramount interest to himself.

His intimacy with the family fortunately enabled him to attain some insight into her engagements. At Les Etangs, he was throughout the summer a welcome guest,—in Paris, they frequented the same society; and though the journey to Italy was an unexpected trial, he had the happiness of welcoming her back still free, and beautiful and captivating as ever.

For a moment, the rumour that Lord Greville, the Englishman now so closely attached to the

Hotel de Rostanges, was there as the accepted lover of Eugénie, excited his serious alarm. But even love could not blind the clear perceptions of St. Sévron. He soon discerned the truth; and the truth inflicted almost as much pain as his original supposition, for he saw in it a source of shame and disquietude for her he loved. The happiness of Eugénie was bound up in the well-being of her sister; and he consequently beheld in the attentions of the handsome young English lord all that was most to be dreaded for the peace of the family.

Such was St. Sévron's motive for affecting a tender interest for the fair Sophie, in presence of those who, he knew, would not venture to breathe dishonouring rumours concerning a woman distinguished by his affection. Familiar, *too* familiar, with the habits of the loungers of the clubs, he dreaded lest they should acquire the habit of coupling together the names of Greville and Madame de Rostanges. He knew that a stain of this description once incurred, is never effaced; and that the scandal could not fail to reach in time the ears of the

sensitive Marquis, and still more sensitive Eugénie.

“ Neither La Roche Aymar, nor Cerny, nor that *freluquet* of an Englishman, will venture to say a syllable against a woman dear to one so high in authority as myself among the veterans of dandyism !”—was his secret reflection during the scene upon the lawn. “ I must now prevent this young fellow from pursuing his advantages over the good and guileless Sophie, and the idlers here from noticing his indiscreet attention.” And with this view, he took the forbidden seat by her side.

“ Where have my sister and Rostanges placed themselves?” was Madame de Rostanges’s first inquiry of St. Sévron, whose affection for Eugénie, and friendship with her husband, seemed to place him almost on the terms of a relation. “ I lost sight of them the moment we entered the gardens.”

“ They did not lose sight of *you*,” replied the Count, calmly. “ We all stood together admiring your picturesque attitude just now under the hawthorn tree.”

“Then why not wait and accompany us in to breakfast?—I am convinced they have not found so eligible a place as this!”—cried Madame de Rostanges.

“Mademoiselle de Nangis is with Madame de St. Pierre, and Rostanges at no great distance,” replied the Count, addressing this piece of information ostensibly to the lady, in reality to Lord Greville. “But since they have deserted us, let us forget them! and drown our sense of ill-usage in a glass of sherry,”—he continued, now pointedly addressing the Earl. “Here, in the head-quarters of Anglicism, one may venture on such a potation.”

Lord Greville could not refuse. But he bowed with a countenance worthy of Sir James Cobham; nor was it till nearly half an hour had elapsed, that St. Sévron’s easy flow of conversation, called forth into unusual vivacity by the unfeigned pleasure taken by Madame de Rostanges in his society, succeeded in conquering his ill-humour.

“I entreat you, do not believe half that Monsieur de St. Sévron will tell you about

us!" cried she, addressing Greville, at the close of one of the Count's ironical sallies against the Faubourg. "He is always devising treasons against the fair fame of the society of Paris."

"Pardon me,—I have the greatest respect for the society of Paris,"—replied St. Sévron, gravely. "The only fault I find with it is that it does not sufficiently respect *itself*. Free trade is a fine thing; but we really sell ourselves *too* cheap. No people on earth are to be had on such easy terms."

"Yet the other day you were protesting that, since the Madeleine seemed so much to seek in a divinity for its shrines, (having been successively destined to become an opera-house,—a temple of glory,—and a Christian church,) we could not do better than dedicate it to the worship of the golden calf,—the reigning idol of the nation."

"I think so still, my dear Marquise,—I think so still!"—cried St. Sévron. "Even you, by right of sex an opponent of all rational propositions, will allow that gold rules the court, the camp, the grove, from one end of our city

to the other. Ask yourself, for instance,—and to yourself at least be candid in reply,—to whom the lowest of Madame de St. Pierre's curtsies were last night addressed!—To names renowned in history,—to names illustrated by living talent, or eminent merit?—No, no!—The place of honour is assigned among us to wealthy foreigners,—to people who have bought their way into our society,—whose fortunes like mushrooms, sprang from the dirtiest origin,—and whose——”

“ You forget that you are talking in presence of a wealthy foreigner,”—interrupted Madame de Rostanges, blushing deeply.

“ Of course I do ; for howbeit unskilled in English history, ancient or modern, I know just enough to class Lord Greville among those illustrated by the records of past centuries as well as by merits of his own,” said St. Sévron, courteously. “ Moreover, lady fair, your evasion shews consciousness of guilt. You know full well that I allude only to those resident foreigners, who dazzle us with their fêtes and tyrannize over us by their impertinence.”

“ I admit that well-directed hospitality (admire the cunning of the phrase !) is not without its influence among us,” replied the Marquise ; “ especially if exercised by pretty women, or men of gentlemanly address. But let no foreign adventurer thence imply that we are to be purchased by gold by itself, gold. *Mere* money will not suffice.”—

“ It must be of a different complexion from any I have seen offered as a bribe to the door-keepers of *la bonne compagnie*, if it meet with rejection !”—cried Monsieur de St. Sévron. “ Perhaps we are right. We are a nation in modest circumstances. Paris has too much gilding and *or moulu*, and too many fine ladies, to admit of the cultivation of Spartan virtue.”

“ The black broth would scarcely, I fear, go down after this excellent *potage à la Reine*,” observed Lord Greville.

“ Let the world swallow its *potage à la Reine*, and welcome,” cried St. Sévron ;—“ nay, let it say grace afterwards to its divinity, the golden calf,—but not pretend meanwhile to maintain a purer worship !”—

“Hypocrisy is said to be the homage rendered by vice to virtue,” persisted Greville, amused by his earnestness.

“Like other tribute money, then, it should bear the image and superscription of its Cæsar!”—cried St. Sévron. “Admire, I beseech you, the outcry raised among us against the absence of blood and birth, in persons recently raised to public distinction by their energy and talent; (I may differ from them in principle, but I admit their energy and talent;) while in these foreign *millionnaires*, whose sole merit consists in their credit with Rothschild, the self-same sins of pedigree, nay, blemishes still more flagrant, are boldly winked at!”—

“Did I not tell you *qu’il cassait les vitres à tout le monde*?”—cried Madame de Rostanges. “To look at Monsieur de St. Sévron, *who* would imagine that his quiet manners and *petite voix flûtée* were conveying such bitter truths!”

“*‘La raison, avec son petit filet de voix!’*” said Lord Greville, quoting from Molière. “Monsieur de St. Sévron would find very different grounds for his diatribes in my own country. We English, though reviled by the

Continent as a nation of shopkeepers, are, next to the Americans, the most infatuated worshippers on earth of rank and titles."

"I *have* heard you taxed with love of titularity," answered the Count, pleased to find him relaxing in his reserve. "But I never knew you accused of selling your good word for thirty pieces of silver."

"Because money is a drug among us," replied the Earl. "Higher importance is attached to aristocratic distinction."

"Perhaps because aristocratic distinction is conceded by your government to the claims of merit," said St. Sévron, courteously. "Your legists, your statesmen, your warriors,—"

"Are ennobled it is true,—but it is only in their posterity their ennoblement is honoured," rejoined Greville. "It reflects little credit upon our national feeling, that a man of humble origin attaining chivalric distinctions, is pursued his whole life long with covert insults; while his children, devoid perhaps of all that raised him to the peerage, are in the next generation hailed as of noble birth."

"Well, well!—Rochefoucault swears that we

derive comfort from the misfortunes of our neighbours ; and I own it affords me consolation to hear of their follies !" cried St. Sévron. " I had thought you a wiser people, my dear lord. I fancied that Bacon yesterday, and Brougham to-day—"

" Brougham ?" interrupted Greville, with a smile.

" Lyndhurst then, if you like it better. By your adoption in the Faubourg, I infer you to be a Conservative ?"—

" A Whig, according to the interpretation of the last century, which implies a Tory in the parlance of the present," replied Lord Greville. " I have, however, at present, no right to call myself anything. Deeds, not words, constitute the politician ; and I have not yet claimed an existence for myself within the walls of parliament."

The Comte de St. Sévron, accustomed to the proscription which closes the French chamber against the political aspirant till the age of thirty, and to the national jactancy which renders the embryo Sullys and Colberts awaiting their ad-

mittance, the most self-asserting of politicians, was pleased with the modesty of the young peer.

“ In our country,” he replied, “ words, rather than deeds, seem to constitute the politician. You will hear us talk codes, protocols, speeches from the throne,—we are never silent, in short, till our opinion is asked by the country. Not one of us but knows everything!—Cerny, yonder, (who stands wondering at your patience with my prose,) because admitted into the hunting stables of the prince royal, affects to acquaint you with the most secret mysteries of the royal cabinet—*comme si on connaissait le palais, pour en avoir visité les latrines!*—While our friend Roche Aymar, because he reads the Charivari, fancies himself intitled to accuse of crimes worthy the galleys, a minister who, if a villanous politician and vulgar fellow, is a highly amiable man,—a man whose kindness of heart equals the shrewdness of his head.”

“ I see you are veering round towards the *côté gauche!*”—exclaimed the Marquise. “ I have often told you that it would one day be the

office of Monsieur de Rostanges to lead you to the foot of the throne."

"That would scarcely demonstrate my liberalism!" cried St. Sévron, laughing. "I look upon Louis Philippe as the leading conservative of Europe. Louis Philippe, if not my lawful sovereign, is at least the head of my party. It seems the property of a gilded *fauteuil* overhung by a regal canopy, to communicate the true monarchical feeling. As the tripod inspired the Pythoness, the throne inspires autocracy. Don't talk to me of your constitutional governments! The English, (as one of our wise ones says,) the English are the only people under the sun who have discovered the art of limiting the powers of a man whose face figures upon half-a-crown—"

"And consequently, under a whole one," added Madame de Rostanges, laughing.

"I have as little doubt that Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, was a liberal, as that Louis Philippe, King of France, has become a conservative," observed Lord Greville. "Expe-

rience, which enlightens individuals, is said to darken the minds of princes; but as kings, like the engine-drivers on a railway, are the first to suffer by any rash acceleration of speed, —we cannot wonder that they look anxiously to the safety-valve."

"Moving already?"—cried the Comte de St. Sévron to Madame de Rostanges. "I fear we have frightened you away by the gravity of our discussions?"—

"On the contrary, you have almost made me overlook the fact that I have not only finished breakfast these five minutes, but that I am nearly the last lady in the room!" she replied, peeping through the branches of the orange trees towards the gallery, now almost exclusively filled with Englishmen, lingering over their wine after the French cavaliers had hurried towards the dancing-room.

Little did Sophie conjecture, as she inquired of Lord Greville on whose arm she now followed the throng, whether he did not find Monsieur de St. Sévron very agreeable, that

the sole object of his chattiness at table was to prevent a more intimate conversation between herself and her companion. But he had succeeded. All hope of such an enjoyment was at an end. Greville had already noticed with wonder, the familiarity existing between Frenchwomen of the same set, — a sort of girlish *camaraderie de convent* which would be held unmatronly among his own countrywomen. Mademoiselle de Nangis and Sidonie de Chauvieu might have been excused, he thought, for giggling together concerning the delinquencies of their mantuamakers or partners, their saddle-horses or lapdogs. But Eugénie and her friend were still subjected to the demureness of French young ladyism ; and it was the Duchesse de St. Pierre, the Comtesse Jules de la Roche Aymar, and others of the *lionne* tribe, who now crowded round Madame de Rostanges, besetting her with idle questions or stories without an end, setting at nought that important branch of eloquence, *l'art de la parenthèse*.

“What an exquisite bouquet!” cried Madame de St. Pierre, suddenly seizing and ex-

amining the nosegay of her cousin, as they all stood together at the extremity of the lawn, over which the shades of a delicious summer twilight were now gathering. “Madame Adde, I perceive!—*Mais depuis quelque temps ma chère tu donnes terriblement dans les gardénias?—Cette bonne Madame Adde prétend même que tu en as fait hausser le prix courant!*”

“Yes,—Eugénie and I are passionately fond of them,” replied Madame de Rostanges.

“But I did not perceive any in your sister’s bouquet?”—observed the provoking Madame de St. Pierre.

“She had perhaps removed them, knowing that the Marquis dislikes their scent,” replied Sophie, who had not noticed any difference between the two bouquets presented by Lord Greville. Yet Greville, who, though engaged in conversation with Madame de la Roche Aymar heard every word that was passing, flattered himself the evasion was intentional, and that a secret understanding existed between himself and the pure-minded Sophie!

He was startled, however, to perceive that his

attentions had excited the notice of Madame de St. Pierre,—a woman who, though correct in her conduct, or perhaps, under cover of that very virtue, permitted herself unlimited licence of speech. Greville felt assured that the young Duchesse would rejoice in an opportunity of opening upon her gentler cousin a battery of raillery, in return for the remonstrances of Madame de Rostanges touching her own wild feats of smoking cigars in the Bois de Boulogne, winning wagers of Albert de la Roche Aymar by leaping its fences, and other extravagances of a similar kind.

He felt that he must keep watch over himself. His dearest hopes would be frustrated if any imprudence on his own part, any ill-nature on that of the world, should interfere with his visit to Normandy. At present, the invitation had not been so seriously given by the Marquis as to constitute an engagement. He resolved, therefore, instead of lingering by the side of Madame de Rostanges through the evening, to bestow his attentions elsewhere.

But in what quarter?—With all others than

Eugénie and her sister, his habitual shyness still prevailed. He had been at no pains to extend his intimacies in Paris. The vivacity of *les lionnes* overpowered,—the affectation of *les lions* disgusted him. In the one besetting interest, all others had been neglected. The stars of the diplomatic galaxy shone in vain before him;—the official authorities stood conversing in groups which he had no sanction to join. He had sought introductions to no one; beguiled by the charm of female society into sauntering away his hours in a city wherein are concentrated such active impulses of human intelligence.

“Here comes your Mephistopheles!”—whispered Monsieur de St. Sévron, beside whom he found himself standing at the end of the gallery, now lighted up for the evening, and crowded with dancers.

“My Mephistopheles?”—reiterated Lord Greville, looking inquiringly round, as if for an explanation.

“You need not glance so suspiciously towards poor Espérance!” cried the Count, laughing. “Do not fall into the vulgar error of fancying

that the tempter of our times must needs be old. Had Mephistophiles really worn the impish countenance assigned him by the piquant *burin* of Retsch, do you think a clever fellow like Faust would have fallen into his toils?—No, no!—the wolf in sheep's clothing of the old fable is still the most fatal of all *loup-garoux*; and the devil of to-day is consequently a devilish good fellow,—his hairy tail coiled up under a coat made by Blin, and his cloven feet concealed in pumps resplendent with patent varnish.—*Le voilà !*”—he continued, pointing to Fred Massingberd, who was just then approaching, with Lady Cobham on his arm.—“As I told you, here comes your Mephistophiles!”—

“And my Margaret?”—inquired Lord Greville, with a smile.—

“I am not so sure,” replied St. Sévron.—“She looks, however, innocent enough to be a temptress!”

“Innocent, indeed!”—murmured Greville, shrugging his shoulders as he recalled to mind the inanity of poor Julia's conversation. At

that moment, nevertheless, he felt her arrival to be a relief.

“ I understood that, on account of your journey, you had renounced all thoughts of coming here ?” said Greville, hastening forward to accost her.

“ We do not go to-morrow. There was some mistake about the passport ; and Sir James conceived that under such circumstances, our absence from the fête of our Ambassador might be considered extraordinary. It was too late, when the discovery was made, to come to the breakfast. Lady Greville, indeed, tried to persuade us it was scarcely worth while to come to the ball ; and I am so tired with the pleasures of last night, and the plague of sight-seeing of this morning, as to be quite of her opinion. I told Sir James so,—but he would insist upon my coming !”

Recollecting his contradictions of the morning, Lord Greville could readily understand this arbitrary exercise of authority on the part of the country baronet.

“Cobham accompanied you, at least?”—he inquired, with an air of becoming interest.

“Accompanied her?”—cried Massingberd, with a look of pity. “I should think so!—Pray when did you ever see a pair of English turtles fly fifty yards apart?—Luckily for their reputation, however, I was near the door when they entered; and undertook the task *de conduire Madame* into the ball-room. And now, I wish to heavens you would let me make her over to you, Grev, my boy!—I saw whist tables in the small drawing-room, as we passed through; and as you are not a dancing man, —”

“No need, surely, of an apology!” cried Greville, gallantly offering his arm to Julia, who accepted it with smiling apathy; and it was no small satisfaction to find occupation as the cavalier of a fair one for whose entertainment it was unnecessary to exercise any excess of intellectual effort.

Lord Greville commenced his duties in the truly English fashion of disturbing all the arrangements of the ball-room, by conducting Lady Cobham through the crowd of dancers

from one extremity of the gallery to the other as if in search of a seat; but in reality, that she might enjoy the pleasure of staring and being stared at. Great indeed was the admiration she excited.

Poor Julia, however, was in no mood to appreciate her triumph. She had been scolded all the morning by her husband, and harassed all the evening by her nurses; receiving hints from the one that she was an indifferent wife, and from the other that she was an indifferent mother; and while the tribe of Ebsworths, Macmichaels, and other English misses, thought her a very happy woman to be Lady Cobham, to possess such quantities of diamonds, and the escort of a handsome young lord, Julia considered herself only so far fortunate that her headache and heartache did not relieve themselves in a burst of tears.

“I am sadly afraid Lord Greville is a dreadful flirt!”—whispered one of the elderly spinster daughters of the Marquis of Droneham, Lady Maria Dronely, to her sister Lady Jane, as they sat partnerless, primly intent upon the

ball. "We must be careful not to say anything about it to his mother; but I watched him hid all dinner-time in a corner among the orange trees, with a very pretty Frenchwoman, (who, no doubt, was like all Frenchwomen, no better than she should be.) And now, just look at him, whispering to Lady Cobham!—I don't say that there is any positive harm in Lady Cobham, but she is a very giddy young person!"

"Giddy, indeed!" — retorted Lady Jane, shaking her head. "What is she doing here at all?—Lady Greville would not hear of coming!—They are all to start for England in the morning, and are to make only a day on the road."

"A day on the road?—and with two ailing children?—You may well call her giddy!" retorted Lady Maria, though she knew that poor Julia, from the hour of her marriage, had never exercised a choice in the smallest of her domestic arrangements. "There, my dear, just look at them!—*Poor* Sir James!"—

"How shameful of that young coxcomb of a

Mr. Massingberd, not to take better care of his sister," said Lady Jane. "Husbands are proverbially blind,—but the brother *must* see what is going on."

"He sees nothing but his cards, my dear!—I left him just now, as usual, betting away at whist."

"I declare I should not be surprised if they were going to dance!" whispered Lady Maria, as if announcing an act of the greatest turpitude. "Lady Cobham, with *her* young family, dancing!—waltzing, perhaps!—Good heavens!—what a pity that Sir James Cobham is not aware of what is going on!"—

"I don't think they are going to dance," observed Lady Jane, in the same mysterious whisper, "because I remember that at Naples, Lady Greville wished her son to ask *me* at that last Accademia ball, and he excused himself as not knowing the figures of a quadrille."

"Ah! my dear!—Consider what he has been through *since*, poor young man; a month at Paris with that libertine Mr. Massingberd. Depend on it he knows how to waltz, and every

thing else that is bad, by this time. Lady Greville is likely to have a sad time of it!"

"Well, there *is* some *little* excuse to be made for him," sighed Lady Jane, in a sentimental tone. "He is the handsomest man in the room, the handsomest man, *I* think, I ever saw. And, after all, young men *will* be young men!—"

Considering that, in their own case, old women chose to be young ones, this was not allowing much.

"Surely," cried Lady Maria, in pretended consternation, "Surely, my dear, that is Sir James Cobham peeping in through the conservatory door, near the orchestra?"—

"To be sure it is,—and with a face as black as thunder!" cried her sister. "I sincerely hope he wont happen to see them. Only look at them now,—chatting and whispering together with the utmost unconcern."

"Ah! poor young creature!—I feel for her parents," ejaculated Lady Maria. "Mrs. Mas-singberd, though rather tiresome, is an excellent woman, and the father a most inoffensive man. Do you see Sir James Cobham still, my dear Jane?"

“No, my dear; he has disappeared. He is perhaps coming round through the conservatory to pounce upon them. I am afraid he will hardly get through that phalanx of Frenchwomen at the upper door. How stupid it is of people to stand encumbering doorways in that sort of way.—Ah! there he is again.—See how he is trying to make his way!—But it won't do!—Nothing so disobliging as the French, unless for a person in their own set.—The *lionnes* are all gossiping together in a mass, you see; and don't pay the smallest attention to Sir James Cobham!”—

“Who would, that could help it!” was the involuntary rejoinder of Lady Maria. “How *very* hot and cross he looks.—Ah! now for a scene!—He has got into the room at last,—but what has become of his wife and Lord Greville?”—

“They must have glided through the dancers, and made their way out through the throne room!” cried Lady Jane. “What cunning!—Sir James may be an hour now without discovering them!—There are so many ins and outs, and short cuts in this house, to say nothing of

the gardens, that I defy you to find anybody who does not wish to be found."

"It would really be a mercy to that poor young creature if we were to give him a hint which way she is gone!" said Lady Maria, in a hypocritical whine.

"It certainly would be the best thing for *her*. But if he were to call out Lord Greville,—think of poor dear Lady Greville!—At all events, let us follow, and see the end of it.—What a shocking affair!—Foreign example, eh?—See the result of coming abroad!"

Thus trivial is the origin of half the idle scandals current in society!—But does not the arrow conveying danger and death derive its mischief from two worthless feathers?—

CHAPTER XI.

Il y a dans le cerveau des femmes une case de moins, et dans leur cœur un fibre de plus que chez les hommes.

CHAMPFORT.

ON the following day, as on the day succeeding any fête of considerable magnitude, nothing was talked of in Paris but the details of the exquisite déjeuner of l'ambassadrice d'Angleterre. All those who were present protested, and all those who were less fortunate admitted on their shewing, that never had there been an entertainment so unexceptionable.

“ *Je ne sais pas. Il me semble qu'il y manquait quelque chose !*” observed Madame Jules de La

Roche Aymar, who happened to form one of a numerous circle sitting in judgment upon the affair, in the salon of the Hotel de Rostanges.

“And what, I beseech you?”—cried her husband. “*Que diable ! Il y avait des petits pois tant qu’on en voulait ;*—there were strawberries, pine-apples, and—”

“*Il me semble pourtant qu’il y manquait quelque chose !*”—persisted Madame Jules, glancing at Madame de Rostanges, beside whose chair the place usually occupied by Lord Greville was vacant.

“For my part,” cried Madame de St. Pierre, “I never spent a pleasanter day. My yellow lilies were not the least faded when I returned home at night; and we had two charming mazourks.”

“Yes, to the great dissatisfaction of the English ladies, I can tell you!” interrupted the old Princess de Chaulieu. “The English ladies declared, in the first place, that for worlds they would not dance such a dance, or make such an exhibition;—in the next place, that none of you had the slightest notion of a mazourk, and

were making sad geese of yourselves;—and, in the third place, that they had never seen it before, and had not the least idea how it ought to be danced.—Monsieur de Cerny protests, you say, that he often saw it performed in England?—Ay, I dare say,—on the stage,—but not in society, depend upon it! I spent,—*pour mes péchés*,—nearly twenty years in England.—I married there;—(still *pour mes péchés*!) I have been at hundreds of balls in London. At the Duchess of Gordon's,—at Devonshire House, in the good old times of Devonshire House,—and I can promise you that there was no mazourk!—Reels, if you please; reels and country-dances without end,—jogging you to pieces, like farmers' daughters trotting to market,—but no mazourk! There was the *boulangère*!—I dare say, by the way, that Monsieur de Cerny mistook the *boulangère* for the mazourk.—There *is* some slight resemblance between them,—eh, Sidonie?"

"I beg your pardon, mamma," said Mademoiselle de Chaulieu, who, like the rest of the world, found some difficulty in following the thread of her mother's rambling discourses.

“Never mind, my dear. You are better engaged talking to Mademoiselle de Nangis. Eugénie, child, when do you set off for Les Etangs? I shall be very glad, *mon enfant*, to hear that you are gone to Normandy.—You have done yourself no good in Italy.—All your fine bloom is gone. You want the bracing air of the coast; you want the sea breezes.—No one is the worse now and then for sea breezes.—In Madame’s time, poor soul, I accompanied her twice to Dieppe; and should not mind going there again, particularly as it might be an advantage to Sidonie, only that it is so near to Eu!—One never feels safe,—one never feels sure of not meeting people whom it would be disagreeable to meet.—You think I am almost as near to them in my house in the Rue de Lille?—Perhaps so; but *en province*, one is more exposed;—*en province*, one is defenceless.—A *partie de campagne*?—Nothing I dote upon like a *partie de campagne*!—Who is talking about a *partie de campagne*?”

“The Duchess is arranging one with Madame de Rostanges, my dear mamma,” replied Sidonie

“ And where, pray ?”

“ In the woods of Meudou.”

“ What folly !—The only place for a *partie de campagne* at this time of year, is St. Cloud !” cried the Princess. “ The lilies of the valley, you know, Eugénie !—The whole road is clothed with *muguet* ! Think of a whole road clothed with *muguet* ! Out of bloom ?—the season past ?—Nonsense, my dear !—I saw quantities in the flower-market of the Madeleine not ten days ago. And just on the road from St. Cloud to Ville d’Avray, through the forest, there is a charming green avenue,—dry, sloping, shady,—(*parlez moi de ça !*) the very thing for a *partie de campagne*.—Ah ! Eugénie, *ma petite chatte* !—it will be the very thing for your pale cheeks ! Better than fifty balls,—better than fifty *déjeuners* ! I was saying yesterday to Monsieur de St. Séveron, that since your return from Italy, you were so altered there was no recognising you.—And to-day you look worse than ever !”—

“ Not now, mother, that you have brought such a flush of bloom into her cheeks !” cried Mademoiselle de Chaulieu, taking the hand of

her friend. "Is anything the matter with you, dearest Eugénie?" whispered she, ashamed of her mother's indelicacy.

"Only the fatigue of yesterday's fête."

"At yesterday's fête, you said you were suffering from the fatigue of Madame de St. Pierre's ball!"

"And at Madame de St. Pierre's ball, she said she was tired with taking so long a ride!" cried the Princess.

"In short, you are resolved that I shall be ill, whether I will or no," cried Mademoiselle de Nangis, trying to rally her spirits. "I have, however, I assure you, no ailment; and should this party, this pic-nic, take place, I promise you to be in full bloom, ghostly and bodily."

It was nevertheless not without cause that Madame de Chaulieu and her daughter found fault with the looks of their young friend. Eugénie, who had arrived in Paris full of spirits, full of excitement, enchanted to find herself once more at home, had suddenly sunk into depression. She was like a person who, after aspiring too high, finds herself suddenly pre-

cipitated to the ground and crushed by the fall.

Of the many trials to which women are exposed among the ordeals of the great world, few more critical than those which beset them at the age of *Mademoiselle de Nangis* ; while still incapacitated by ignorance of the world, and of their own faculties and passions, to struggle with evil. The principles, however strict, in which they have been reared by teachers and preachers, are precisely such as cannot be brought to bear upon their position. Exposed to assiduities hitherto unfamiliar, to gallantries of look and speech which they scarcely know how to interpret, their fancy is caught, nay, perhaps their affections are engaged, by attentions that appear proofs of preference ; but, which, they are afterwards assured by persons better experienced in the ways of the world, “meant nothing.”—They are even derided by these older and wiser heads, for having been so weak as to attribute sincerity to men gentle at least in birth, manners, and breeding !—Meanwhile, the fatal seed is sown, to bring forth a

plentiful crop of cares, or coquetry. The girl, thus sharply roused from the reveries of a first attachment, becomes either disconsolate, peevish, and infirm of health; or rash and reckless, prepared to inflict on others the injury sustained by herself.

It is to avoid this crying evil, that the French have imagined the *mariage de convenance*. The great improbability, the almost impossibility, that the chances of society should unite in marriage persons attracted towards each other by a first mutual choice, first inspired the idea of leaving such selections to the discretion of older heads; an arrangement modified by the reforms of modern society into a suggestion of selection, to be approved or disapproved by the parties.

To insure the success of such a system, it is necessary, however, to forestal the danger of adverse impressions. Hence, the early marriages of the French; hence, their objection to the introduction of unmarried girls into worldly pastimes. Rarely do they visit a ball-room,—still more rarely a theatre.—The man destined to become their husband, is the first to offer

them those attentions which rarely fail to move the feelings of a very young person, instructed to regard the vagaries of choice exercised among ourselves as indelicate and monstrous. The influence of domestic affections,—of a community of interests—of peremptory duties,—completes the charm. And though much may be urged against the wisdom of conventional marriages, yet after examining the domestic history of the higher classes in both countries, more especially when including in the investigation the condition of the single as well as the morality of the married, it will be seen that the question is more nicely balanced than a cursory glance would lead us to suppose.

Mademoiselle de Nangis, with the enthusiasm of a gifted but unformed mind, revolted by the evils of the system, had become a reformer, to follow the usual fate of reformers, and repent her precipitancy. Without parents or near relations to watch over their happiness, the destinies of Eugénie and her sister were governed by a priest-ridden uncle, nearly eighty years of age; who fancied himself providing

admirably for poor Sophie in allying her estate with a noble one adjacent to her own, and quartering her arms with the ancient blazon of the house of Rostanges,—the stripling Marquis, and the Marquis of sixty, being alike unimportant in his eyes.

By this, Eugénie had been disgusted. This abuse of power though fortunate in its results, had determined her to see the world and judge for herself. Her objection to the Comte de St. Sévron was the result of mere waywardness. She had refused him because proposed to her by those in authority over her; and because resolved to seek in the wide field of society a person whose dispositions were thoroughly congenial with her own.

“I must have intelligence,—I must have information,—I must have figure,—I must have manners, temper, and noble birth. With all the rest I can dispense!” was her declaration to Madame de Rostanges, on occasion of a marriage proposed for her by the old Countess of la Roche Aymar with her elder son.

“I scarcely know what advantages you in-

clude among 'all the rest,' my poor child!" was Sophie's wiser reply. "Every woman is sensible of the advantages of figure, mind, temper, manners and birth, but wisely abates in marriage a trifle of her pretensions. We cannot all draw the great prize, my dearest Eugénie. Let those consider themselves lucky who are not fated to a blank."

But Eugénie was seventeen. Eugénie would not yet hear of blanks. She was happy with her sister and the kind Marquis. She did not want to marry; and it was difficult to oppose the wishes of one so attached and so beloved. Madame de Rostanges, accustomed to view in her more gifted sister a superior being, resigned herself without difficulty; it was only the Marquis who shook his head. The Marquis was rich in that worldly wisdom which is better than no wisdom at all; or, at all events, a valuable resource in the order of society to which he belonged.

"Eugénie is wrong to set herself up thus early in defiance to the customs of the country," said he. "When people rebel against the yoke

of public opinion, it is oftener to fall below the level than to rise above it. The usages of a country are the growth of the wisdom of centuries."

"Of the prejudices of centuries!" was the sportive rejoinder of Mademoiselle de Nangis. "Custom makes the Hottentot daub himself with grease,—custom makes the Abyssinian swallow locusts,—and the New Zealander, human flesh. But don't let custom compel me to make a bad wife, my good brother,—whether to your friend Monsieur de St. Sévron, or poor Ferdinand de La Roche Aymar, or even to our free and easy kinsman, Colonel d'Aramon."

Such was the state of her feelings on departing for Italy; and though the high Carlist circles of Rome afforded several suitors who were pronounced by her brother-in-law to be suitable matches, Eugénie persisted in her fastidiousness. Her deportment in society was unexceptionable. She encouraged no one; she gave her attention to no one. The Marquis was the companion in whom she seemed to take delight; and her exemplary care of his comfort

from the moment his health became impaired, was such as not only to call forth the gratitude of her sister, but to render them thankful for the peculiarities of opinion which still assigned them so charming an inmate. Perfect confidence,—confidence without a drawback,—prevailed between the sisters ; who, notwithstanding their utter difference of character, were united like night and day, by imperceptible gradations of light and shade harmonizing them into happy combination.

Thus stood affairs when they quitted France ; thus stood affairs when again they crossed the frontier. Of the three so overjoyed to revisit their native country, Eugénie was perhaps the happiest. Her heart was elate with all the bright impulses of girlhood. An unclouded destiny lay before her. She was come, dearer than ever to her family, to be folded to the heart of partial friends, and claim her place in those brilliant circles whose favour was bespoken by the popularity of Monsieur and Madame de Rostanges.

Even when they entered the gates of Paris,

even when they installed themselves in the old Hotel in the Rue St. Dominique, the heart of Mademoiselle de Nangis was under the influence of happy illusions. She believed,—what could be more natural,—that it was to *her* the attentions of Lord Greville were devoted. She it was, who, at their first meeting, had attracted his notice ; she it was to whom, at the Château de Grangeneuve, his assiduities were directed. Less timid than her sister, she had been more earnest in her expressions of gratitude for his exertions in their behalf ; and the intimacy ensuing had been readily endowed by her inexperience with the attributes of love.

In the secrecy of her soul, she believed herself to be an object of preference to one singularly accordant with her preconceived notions of perfection. Person, deportment, temper, talents, were united in Greville. Of all the men she had seen, his air was the most distinguished,—his manner the most ingratiating ; and it did not enter into the calculations of Mademoiselle de Nangis, accustomed to find herself considered a suitable match by the highest nobles in

France, that obstacles of birth or fortune could forbid their union.

There was nothing, in short, to interfere with the destiny in store for her. Happy Eugénie ! to have opposed the habits of her country and the wishes of her friends, to be thus nobly rewarded ! Happy Eugénie ! to have escaped a marriage with Ferdinand de la Roche Aymar, who could talk of nothing but horses,—and with St. Sévron, severe with the wisdom of twenty years' seniority,—to become the chosen of a being high in birth, high in intellectual endowments,—and admitted by the universal acclamation of the Faubourg to be *le jeune homme le plus distingué* that Great Britain had ever contributed to its circles !—The Princesse de Chaulieu, who, secure in her own set from English contact, was somewhat too fond of repeating the old assertion that “ *les Anglais n'ont de mur que les pommes cuites, et de poli que leur acier,*” was fain to admit that in Milor Gréville she beheld the Chesterfield of his own country and the image of her early love, the charming Count Louis de Narbonne.

Scarcely, however, had Mademoiselle de Nangis spent a week in Paris, when her illusions vanished. The moment others began to congratulate her on her conquest of the young English lord, she discerned the truth. The total want of embarrassment in her presence which enabled him to dedicate to *her*, attentions he had not courage to offer to her sister, sufficiently indicated his indifference. In their rides,—their drives,—their encounters in the brilliant circles of the Faubourg,—contrary to the habits of French society, it was to *her* side he attached himself, rather than to that of Madame de Rostanges. Eugénie understood it all. She felt that, when occasion forced *her* to exhibit a preference, it was Cerny, or Chaulieu, or Massingberd, she selected, rather than the object of her choice. No consciousness,—no affection !—She saw that Lord Greville did not love her,—rendered clearsighted by her rash attachment to himself!—

The first moment of discovery was one of anguish and self-upbraiding. But reason and reflection convinced her she had done no wrong.

Few but would have been deceived as *she* had been, by the nature of Lord Greville's attentions. Few but would have supposed, as *she* had supposed, that his praise, his admiration, his words of kindness, his looks of regard, had been indicative of preference. If she had erred, it was in infringing the customs of her country, and relying too boldly upon her own judgment and predilections.

It was done, however.—All that remained for her was to suffer,—to suffer in silence and with resignation.—He would not be long among them.—Better for her that the hero of her vain romance should be a foreigner whom after a few weeks she might never more behold, than one of her own countrymen, a member of their society, and affording to her heart a perpetual memento of its folly.

The lapse of a few days brought convictions of a still more agonizing kind. This stranger, —this Lord Greville,—whose merits and attractions she had been constantly reciting in the ears of her sister,—was it certain that Madame de Rostanges beheld him with indifference?—

Was it *possible* for a man so gifted and so devoted, to be constantly by Sophie's side, without producing an impression on her feelings?—Poor Eugénie clasped her hands over her bosom, pressing them forcibly upon her heart as if to subdue its new and throbbing emotions, while inquiring of herself whether this horrible thought were not the inspiration of jealousy; and whether she were not doubly guilty in imputing such a fault to her sister.

Still, the thought recurred,—still, the apprehension quickened. There was every reason, indeed, for its recurrence.—Greville was constantly in her society.—She, who for a time had hailed his visits with such pride, such joy, as a tribute paid to herself, saw him arrive day after day, with the same seeming courtesies for *her*, — the same scarcely concealable adoration for Madame de Rostanges!—It required some fortitude to retain her place in that crowded *salon*, in order that the world might continue to mistake his motives as she had once mistaken them; not as a solace to her pride, but as a safe-

guard for the reputation of the unsuspecting Sophie.

“I would die rather than that a contemptuous word or look should be directed towards *her*!”—faltered Eugénie, when, taking refuge at length in her own chamber, she found comfort in tears. “I would die rather than that poor Rostanges, who takes such pride in her, should suffer a moment’s uneasiness on her account. Heaven knows he has had cause to take pride in her!—With all her beauty,—such gentleness,—such purity,—such absence of coquetry!—In Italy,—here,—of what adoration has she not been the object;—and almost without perceiving that she was admired. No, no!—the peace of my good brother-in-law must not be endangered by even a suspicion of evil.”

The prolongation of Greville’s stay in Paris was consequently a serious misery to poor Eugénie. She was not prepared for such an extension of her trials. The hourly sense of mortification arising from his presence, recollections of the hopes she had cherished and of

their groundless nature, were doubly embittered by the consciousness that her devotion remained undiminished. There was such a charm in his every look,—his every movement!—Perfect grace, perfect breeding, seemed to govern his slightest gesture. Even as regarded his moral qualities, she felt convinced that he was the dupe of his own heart, and knew not the guilty passion he was cherishing.

She was sometimes almost out of patience with the pertinacity of her brother-in-law in inviting, nay, almost forcing Lord Greville to the house. Though the conduct of the Marquis de Rostanges was actuated by sentiments of grateful hospitality, she thought there was something ignoble in courting so warmly the friendship of a man of Greville's consequence. She was now beginning to understand the eminence of his position, — to understand it through the vulgar obsequiousness of English servants, and the vulgar boasting of Massingberd. Yet still the Marquis would not be dissuaded from inducing him to share their daily meals, and use their modest equipages.

When Lord Greville presented her or her sister, but oftener herself, with some rare exotic, Rostanges would descant upon its cost and value, as though the purchase had been made by a prodigal son of his own. Eugénie could not bear that the Marquis should be degraded in his eyes by such officious parsimoniousness. What were his expenses to *them*?—or why should they withdraw him from his luxurious haunts into their more simple household?

It is difficult to be satisfied with the conduct of others towards the object of our affections; it is still more difficult to be satisfied with the conduct of the object of our affection towards others. Mademoiselle de Nangis, who, when in company with Lord Greville and her sister, was constantly on the watch lest anything unguarded in their deportment should betray them to others, or to each other, and whose nights were rendered sleepless and days anxious by perceiving the rapid growth of a passion gradually defying all control, even his own, no sooner heard him taxed by the Faubourg with a “*penchant pour*

cette charmante Lédi Cobamme," than she felt inclined to resent it as an infidelity. An attachment which was to take him wholly out of their circle and withdraw his interest entirely from the Hotel de Rostanges, was a calamity she had not contemplated.

At the fête of the Duchesse de St. Pierre, she noted his conduct with surprise. At the Embassy breakfast, she was displeased as well as amazed. He seemed to be trifling with her sister ;—to be attempting to gain an influence over her feelings by exciting her jealousy. That any man, even Lord Greville, should presume to coquet with one so irreproachable in word or deed as Sophie de Rostanges, appeared impossible. Yet who could say what evil influence might not have been exercised over his character by such companions as St. George, and Frederick Massingberd ?—

The pleasantries of Madame de St. Pierre concerning the gardenias, therefore, more especially when coupled with Greville's unusual absence, irritated and annoyed her. She was vexed, too, to hear her sister acquiesce so

readily in the project of a *partie de campagne*, in which she felt certain that Greville would be included. Did they not meet often enough,—morning,—evening,—in private,—in public?—Was not that noble, that expressive countenance ever before them,—ever beaming upon them?—And must Sophie devise new modes for attracting him to their society, and insuring the dangerous enjoyment of his own?

All that morning, however, no Greville made his appearance!—By the decree of the Marquis de Rostanges, they were consequently obliged to forego their ride; and though, on entering the calèche for an airing, Sophie carefully indicated to the coachman the route usually pursued by their intimates, along the Champs Elysées, through the Porte Dauphine, and past La Muette towards the Mare d'Auteuil,—of Greville, they saw nothing! All the *élégants* of Paris were in the drive. Cerny, the two La Roche Aymars, Chaulieu, St. George, St. Pierre, were ready, hat in hand, to hail them as they passed. But neither Greville nor Massingberd made their appearance.

The evening was devoted to the opening of Franconi's Amphitheatre, in the Champs Elysées, at which the leading *lionnes* of the Faubourg had given each other rendezvous; and the Princesse de Chaulieu, in whose party Eugénie and her sister were included, had been careful to extend her invitation to their English friend. After the Cirque, they were to repair to Tortoni's, to eat ices and prolong as much as possible their evening's amusement. But when the moment arrived for driving to Franconi's, no Greville was to be seen; and the cabriolet containing the Prince de Chaulieu and Frédéric de St. Pierre constituted their escort. Having assumed the chairs belonging to them in the front row, (the only place at Franconi's which can be pre-engaged, an advantage counterbalanced by the annoyance of proximity to the horses and dust,) Eugénie gazed vainly around, in the hope of discovering among the two thousand persons present, the well-known face whose absence so much disquieted her. But no!—All the *lions* were there;—not an idler of Paris was missing among those assem-

bled to applaud the grace and activity of Madame Lejars, and the drolleries of Auriol;—but no sign of Lord Greville!—

“Where has our *cher milor* hidden himself this evening?”—demanded the Princesse de Chaulieu of Madame de Rostanges, leaning across her daughter Sidonie and Mademoiselle de Nangis to make the inquiry, and as usual listening to no answer but her own.—“Ah! very true!—All those horrid Englishmen remained at the Embassy till five this morning, indulging in a second hot supper and iced champagne after we were gone; securing the poor dear ambassadress exactly fourteen hours fatigue, and themselves such dreadful headaches to-day that you see they are not presentable!—You fancy Lord Greville has an aversion to wine?—My dear child, no man has an aversion to wine when he finds himself in the midst of twenty others who are fond of it.—*Il faut hurler avec les loups!*—Depend upon it the sober solemn Greville drank, sang, and made a fool of himself among the best; more especially as he had been undergoing the *peine forte et dure* of entertaining

all the evening that pretty, silly countrywoman of his, Miledi Cobbamme.—*Quelle poupée!*—Not an idea!—not a faculty!—never was there anything so insipid;—no *trait* in her remarks, not even the modest merit of good sense.—Never did one see so complete an automaton! By the way though, now I come to think of it, I am not so sure that this Lord Greville of yours is of the same opinion; for as I was returning from a visit at St. Ouen, just before dinner, whom should I meet on the road to St. Denis, in a post carriage and four, but the automaton and her cross husband,—with another coachfull of red-faced English *bonnes*, and white-faced English children; and after the coachfull of *bonnes* and children, a *fourgon* and four, to contain their rattletraps,—all according to the regular English system of rendering a journey insupportable by dint of travelling with what are called comforts;—and *after* the *fourgon* and four, containing the portable bedstead and silver stewpans, and all the rest of the nursery trumpery,—guess what?—Lord Greville, my dear!—*ce bon milor*, packed in

a postchaise with his mamma, like Polichinelle and Pierrette in a showman's pack!"

"On the road to England?"—exclaimed Engénie and her sister, at the same moment.

"Off to England,—and, as you perceive, in the train of the pretty milédi with the flaxen ringlets!—He told me yesterday he should spend the summer in France. Yet in the course of the evening, you see, she obtained such an ascendancy over him, that he could not bear to let her set off alone!—Somehow or other, it all escaped my memory, or I should have told you when you came in.—But for my part, I think we have no great loss in him; for though his figure and manners are well enough, (they remind me a little, a *very* little, of poor dear Louis de Narbonne,) yet I suspect he was always playing a part!—I suspect that *le fond de son caractère* is cold and haughty, and that he was, on the whole, bored among us.—Let him run after his *mouton qui rêve* of an Englishwoman; who will quote Ossian to him, and listen to his sonnets to the moon.—*On se passera bien du beau milor.*"—

Unspeakable was the joy of Mademoiselle de Nangis when, at the close of Madame de Chaulieu's rambling narrative, she found her hand affectionately pressed by her sister in token of sympathy.

"*Ma pauvre Eugénie !*"—was all that Madame de Rostanges could venture to whisper. But there was such sincerity in her tone, such earnestness in her tearful eyes, that Mademoiselle de Nangis felt as much convinced as by a world of protestations. At that moment, she would gladly have embraced the kind sister whom she had presumed to suspect ; the kind sister who, discerning her preference, had cultivated Lord Greville's friendship for her sake. All her regret for his abrupt departure, was effaced by the joy of a discovery that restored to her respect the object of her dearest affection !—

At the close of the second act, the little party quitted the theatre together, to repair to Tor-toni's. But Madame de Rostanges declined accompanying them. Perceiving the struggle of her sister's feelings, though imperfectly

acquainted with its nature, she chose to return quietly home. But no sooner were the sisters alone in the carriage, than Eugénie fell upon her neck in an agony of tears.

“That it should end thus!” faltered Madame de Rostanges, tenderly embracing her. “That after all our friendship, all our confidence in him, he should leave us without so much as a word of adieu!—My dear, dear Eugénie!—The man who could act thus, is unworthy your regard.—With delight and pride did I watch the growth of an affection which I trusted was mutual.—But a man thus cruelly *inconséquent* could never have made you happy! Console yourself—dearest,—take courage—a brighter destiny is in store for you.”

Mademoiselle de Nangis returned with warmth the tender caresses of her sister; but the conflicting nature of her feelings defied expression.

In gloomy silence, they proceeded to the Hotel de Rostanges, prepared to hasten at once to their own rooms. When lo! as the servants threw open the doors of the saloon, the first

object that struck them was Greville, ensconced in a corner of the sofa, occupied in reading to the Marquis the columns of the *Messenger*! Refreshments and lights stood on the table, awaiting their return; and with a smiling countenance, the visitor rose hastily from his chair to welcome them home.

Eugénie was too much overpowered to utter a syllable;—but Madame de Rostanges could as little repress her exclamation of “Greville?—here,—*still* here?—We heard that you had started for England”—

“You *could* not have done me so much injustice!”—replied Lord Greville, gravely leading her to a seat. “Quit Paris without one grateful word, one farewell to those so dear to me?—No! you cannot have believed it!”—

“And yet the report reached me from those who actually witnessed your departure!”

“I accompanied my mother at her desire as far as St. Denis, and rode back. She seemed resolved not to lose sight of me this morning for a single moment,” replied Greville, more cheerfully. “I could have sworn from her manner

she fancied that her presence secured me from some terrible evil. However, she was satisfied that I complied with her desire; more particularly when she saw me gallop safe off from St. Denis, on my return to Paris."

"How singular!"—murmured Mademoiselle de Nangis.

"How delightful!"—added her sister. "Eugénie, you do not sufficiently express to Lord Greville your joy at his return. Yet half an hour ago, how completely the news of his sudden departure overcame us!—"

Mademoiselle de Nangis coloured deeply, but remained silent. She felt this to be a betrayal of her confidence; and was moreover far from satisfied with Greville's account of his proceedings of the day.

"I returned so late from St. Denis," observed his Lordship, addressing Madame de Rostanges, as if eager to cover the embarrassment of poor Eugénie, "that you were already off to Francini's before I reached the Rue St. Dominique. I knew that by following you I should gain nothing,—that it would be impossible for me to

obtain a place near your party ; and therefore persuaded the Marquis to let me spend the evening with *him*. During your absence, I replaced Mademoiselle de Nangis in her domestic duties. After sweetening Monsieur de Rostanges' coffee, I read him fifty pages of 'Fleur d'Epine,'—till the *Messenger* arrived; and we were deep in the affairs of the East, when your carriage drove into the courtyard."

These explanations seemed to clear up all perplexities ; and never had Greville appeared so charming to either of the sisters, as on that eventful evening. He was like a recovered treasure. They had fancied him lost to them for ever ; and to find him there, domesticated in the very heart of the family, in more than his usual spirits, more than his usual attractions, was almost too trying a transition from despair to joy !—

He was placed between them at table,—he was soothed,—he was caressed ; till the Marquis de Rostanges playfully assured him it would be the ruin of him to become in this way *l'enfant gâté des dames*,—the Vert-Vert of the convent.

—The irony of the old gentleman did not however prevent Madame de Rostanges from overwhelming him with kindness ; or Lord Greville from feeling conscious that the position he occupied was the most enviable upon earth !

END OF VOL. I.



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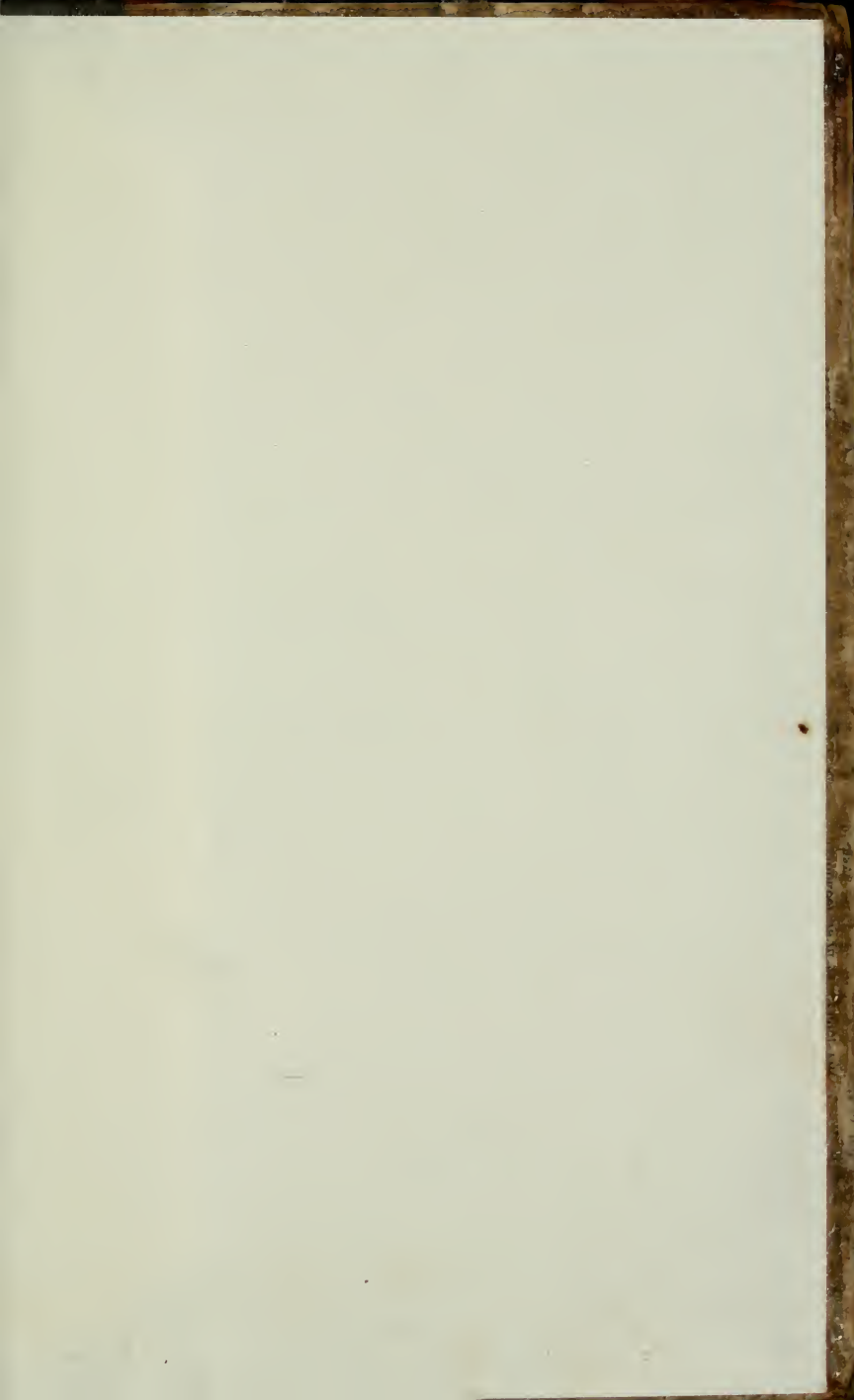
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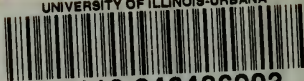
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